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THE MONARCHY IN POLITICS

THE MONARCHY IN POLITICS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"LITERARY FORGERIES" "INVASION AND CONSCRIPTION" ETC.

NEW YORK

DODD MEAD & COMPANY

1917

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THE MONARCHY IN POLITICS

REIGN I: GEORGE III

CHAPTER I

George III. and Party Government

Complaints of the evils of party government and of the need for discovering some more excellent way are among the commonplaces of experience. George III. came to the throne thoroughly impressed with this idea. The country should be governed by his personal friends, not by Whigs nor Tories; ministers should be selected from either side, so that Government might be based on what was called "a broad bottom."

This is well shown in a letter from Sir John Phillips, M.P. for Pembrokeshire, to the minister George Grenville, dated September 8, 1763, in which he alludes to his having cautioned the King against the danger of getting into the hands of the Pitt faction, as their scheme was "directly opposite to His Majesty's, which was to abolish all party distinctions, and to be King over all his people; whereas theirs was to take the throne by storm, to foment divisions, to proscribe all His Majesty's subjects from his service but themselves and their creatures, and to rule with an absolute sway; and I went on so far as to say that if His Majesty suffered that faction to prevail he would be a King in shackles." (*Grenville Papers*, ii. 116.) This system, which as Grenville said in a letter to Lord Bute, dated March 25, 1763, "the King thought of forming for his future government," was bound to be "attended with great difficulties" (*ib.* ii. 35), as the sequel did not fail to show.

Party government has only one alternative, and that is a despotic monarchy. It was towards this that George III. unconsciously tended. His mother's exhortation to him as a boy to show himself a king, and Lord Bute's teaching, and Bolingbroke's works, such as "An idea of a Patriot King," had worked in the same direction. He would use his prerogative for the good of the State, and do away with the abuses of the party system. So the word "prerogative" became a fashionable word in the land. (Walpole's *Memoirs*, i. 16.)

It meant the ruling of men by fear and favour, by their promotion to or removal from lucrative posts, till it seemed as if the whole of politics resolved itself into a struggle for place and office. And such was the ferocity of the struggle that in the first ten years of George's reign there were as many as seven ministries. The intriguing and plotting that accompanied this rapid scene-shifting, the transfer of men from side to side as interest or personal animosities dictated, was the most striking feature of the public life of the time.

Everything came to depend on the King's smile or the King's frown. The monarch's frown might not cost a man his head, as under some of the Roman emperors, but it might cost him his livelihood. A change of Ministers made every salaried place unsafe. Writing to her husband of the political proscription that followed Lord Bute's accession to power in 1762, Lady Temple said: "It is believed and given out that even to a hundredth cousin of those who have not behaved well are to march out of the most trifling places; it is well if our two window-peepers won't be called on." (December 17, 1762, *Grenville Papers*, ii. 21.) And in the strange intrigue which occurred in August 1763 for substituting Mr. Pitt for George Grenville, Pitt insisted on turning out almost every civil officer of rank in the King's service, and on introducing in their stead all who had belonged to the Opposition; though even the King stopped short at that. (*Grenville to Lord Strange*, September 3, 1763, *ib.* ii. 105.)

The King could be most gracious to his friends, but bitter enough to opponents. He closely studied the division lists, and woe betide the man who voted wrongly. A letter

of his to Grenville on November 25, 1763, shows the sort of thing that happened: "The Duke of Bedford and many others pressed for the dismissing some of those that have gone against us. . . . I don't differ much from them in this, therefore should propose dismissing General Conway both from his civil and military commissions; also Mr. Fitzherbert (M.P. for Derby and a Lord of the Board of Trade), and any others who have equally with these gone steadily against us, and giving it out that the rest would have the same fate if they do not mend their conduct." (*ib.* ii. 166.)

Here is another illustration of the same sort. The King writes to Grenville after seeing the division list on the General Warrants debate: "The defection last night is undoubtedly very great. . . . Firmness and resolution must now be shown, and no one's friend saved who has dared to fly off; this alone can restore order and save this country from anarchy; by dismissing, I mean not till the question is decided, but I hope in a fortnight, that those who have deserted may feel that I am not to be neglected unpunished." (*ib.* ii. 267.)

The purport of the letter is clearer than its grammar, neither grammar nor spelling having been among the King's strong points. The instances of this revenge for difference of politics are too numerous for detailed enumeration, but the case of General Conway caused great commotion at the time. But for Grenville, the King, who "showed great resentment at Mr. Conway's conduct," would have dismissed him forthwith. (November 25, 1763.) On April 18, 1764, Grenville had regretfully to inform Conway's brother, Lord Hertford, that the King had resolved to deprive his brother of his employment in the King's Bedchamber, and of the command of his regiment of Dragoons. (*ib.* ii. 296.) Lord Hertford, whilst not defending his brother's conduct, admitted the justice of depriving him of his civil office, but contended that "employments in the army had commonly been thought to be out of the reach of ministerial influence." (April 26, 1764.) Walpole charged Grenville with saying in defence, that the King could not trust his army in the hands of men who were against his measures, and he made

a bold remonstrance against the doctrine of the Ministerial Press, that officers were liable to dismission for their behaviour in Parliament. "Such doctrines were new, and never were avowed before; they clashed with all Parliamentary freedom, and rendered the condition of officers in Parliament most abject, slavish, and dishonourable." (*Grenville Papers*, ii. 342, to T. Pitt, June 5, 1764.)

The King never hesitated to use pressure for effecting his political wishes. In the case of the Royal Marriage Bill of 1772, Lord Mansfield advised him to compel his Ministers to support it heartily or else to change them for others. "The advice was taken and succeeded. The King grew dictatorial, and all his creatures kissed the earth. It was given out that he would take a dissent on this Bill as a personal affront." (Walpole, *Last Journals*, i. 36.) The King wrote to Lord Hertford, General Conway's brother, complaining grievously to him of Conway's vote against the Bill. (*ib.* i. 52, 141.) He also wrote to Lord Sefton for having voted against it, so causing him to absent himself when the question came on again. (*ib.* i. 53.) Compulsion was also put on Col. Burgoyne to vote for the measure.

But the King found his throne no bed of roses, as he put it much later in life. When General Irwin remonstrated with him for having recalled some troops from Gibraltar, the King replied that he agreed with the General, but that his Ministers were responsible for it. "You see my situation. *Ce métier de politique est un très vilain métier; c'est le métier d'un faquin; ce n'est pas le métier d'un gentilhomme.* (*Grenville Papers*, iv. 54, November 5, 1767.)

It is difficult to conceive a system more demoralising to the political life of the time. For every one had not the moral independence to write as Wilkes did to Lord Temple on July 9, 1763: "I hear from all hands that the King is enraged at my insolence, as he terms it: I regard not his frowns, nor his smiles. I will ever be his faithful servant, never his slave. . . . Hypocrisy, meanness, ignorance, and insolence characterise the king I obey. My independent spirit will never take a favour from such a man." (*ib.* ii. 73.)

When in July 1766 Pitt came into power again after Lord Rockingham, the Duke of Grafton succeeding to the

Treasuryship, the King wrote to Pitt to say that he had signed the warrant for making him the Earl of Chatham and Privy Seal, as he knew the Earl of Chatham would "zealously give his mind to destroying all party distinctions, and restoring that subordination to Government which could alone preserve that inestimable blessing Liberty from degenerating into licentiousness." (*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 21.)

In another letter of December 2 of the same year, he declared the object of the Chatham Ministry to be "to rout out the present method of parties banding together"; which could only be obtained by "withstanding their unjust demands, as well as by engaging able men, be their private connections where they will." (*ib.* iii. 137.) The idea was clearly to try to get a national, non-party Government. "From the hour you entered into office," he wrote to Chatham on May 30, 1767, "I have uniformly relied on your firmness to act in defiance of that hydra faction which has never appeared to that height it now does till within these few weeks. Though your relations, the Bedfords and the Rockinghams, were joined with the intention to storm my Closet, yet if I was mean enough to submit they would not join in forming an administration." (*ib.* iii. 261.)

Everything depends on the point of view. Whilst the King would thus talk of his Closet being stormed, or of himself as a prisoner in it, his servants thought of him as a growing tyrant, seeking increasing strength from a deliberate policy of sowing division amongst them. Thus on March 12, 1767, Grenville wrote of an administration on a wide and extended idea of all parties without exception as "the only means to destroy the perpetual idea of change, by destroying the game of fighting one set of men against another." (*Grenville Papers*, iv. 215.)

So both the King and his statesmen had before their minds the same ideal of a Government which, by consisting of all parties, should be free from the opposition of any party.

Public men never so despaired of the country as during the time when party government had been reduced almost to nothing. On July 30, 1767, Lord Mansfield thus wrote to Grenville: "God knows what is to come next. One

faction for another. A series of weak Administrations and perpetual strong opposition will lead to destruction. A struggle of places and pensions is scandalous. The cure must come by serious conviction." (*Grenville Papers*, iv. 129.) To which Grenville replied that only by such conviction and right measures could there be any salvation from the annual struggle for places and pensions which then constituted politics. (*ib.* iv. 149.) "What a fate," wrote Augustus Hervey to Grenville on October 17, 1767, "is hanging over our poor ruined country." (*ib.* iv. 175.) Lord Suffolk wrote of "the disgraceful condition of this deluded country." (*ib.* iv. 437.) Lord Chatham, writing to Rockingham on November 15, 1770, spoke of the ruin of the kingdom, together with the destruction of this free country as "immediately imminent." Of course partisans always take this view of the country, especially if out of office themselves; but when confronted with similar lamentations in our own day, it is comforting to remember that the country has survived similar or worse lamentations in the past.

George's idea was to rule Parliament by corrupting it. Never was corruption more unblushing than in that golden age of monarchy. "With a due exertion of punishments as well as rewards faction will be mastered," he wrote to Chatham on May 30, 1770. A great part of the Civil List was spent on the direct purchase of votes in Parliament. On March 14, 1770, Lord Chatham spoke in favour of a motion, which was negatived, for an inquiry into the state and expenditure of the Civil List. He contended that its expenses were as much open to public inquiry as any other grant of the people to any other purpose, and he spoke out boldly against the Georgian system: "I will trust no sovereign in the world with the means of purchasing the liberties of the people. When I had the honour of being the confidential keeper of the King's intention, he assured me that he never intended to exceed the allowance which was made by Parliament." As the money did not go in personal dissipation, nor in secret service pay, how, he asked, did it go? Did the King want it for a palace or for the encouragement of art; or did he mean "by drawing the purse-strings of his subjects, to spread corruption through the people, to

procure a Parliament, like a packed jury, ready to acquit his ministers at all adventures"? It was the last that he really wanted it for. (March 14, 1766, *Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 427.)

Democracies are not immune from corruption, but corruption was never worse than in the high monarchical and aristocratic days of George III., when votes in Parliament always had their price. Lord Chatham declared in this Civil List debate that Lord Camden lost a pension of £1500 "for the vote he gave in this House in favour of the right of election in the people." (*Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 67, 68.)

This torrent of corruption that overwhelmed the country was the main weapon on which the Crown relied for asserting its supremacy. When Whigs like the Duke of Richmond described the overgrown influence of the Crown as "the great root evil of all" (*ib.* ii. 215, 318), this was what they meant. "The grievances we feel," wrote Lord Rockingham on February 28, 1780, "and the cause of our misfortune, arise from the corruption of men when chosen into Parliament. Cut off the ways and means of corruption, and the effect must and will naturally cease. . . . The great number of offices of more or less emolument, which are now tenable by parties sitting in Parliament, really operate like prizes in a lottery. An interested man purchases a seat upon the same principle as a person buys a lottery ticket. The value of the ticket depends upon the quantum of prizes in the wheel." Therefore he much approved of Burke's proposal to cut off thirty-nine offices tenable by members of the Commons, and of eleven held by the peers. "This indeed was striking at the influence of the Crown over persons in Parliament." (*ib.* ii. 398.)

Grenville's Election Bill, passed in March 1774, did something to remedy the evil. Walpole described it as the best measure he remembered in his time, and a most unexpected mound against corruption. (*Last Journals*, i. 315.)

The supposed constitutional principle of the supremacy of the Minister over the Monarch either did not exist or ceased to exist under such a system. In May 1765, when the King was meditating one of his frequent changes of ministries, "he told George Grenville (then his chief Minister)

he would have him adjourn Parliament for a fortnight." Grenville declared he could not do it, and had to beg the King not to " put him on anything disgraceful or dishonourable " ; that it was not his place to adjourn Parliament with a view to a change of Government made without his advice and against his approval. (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 171.)

George III. had a natural bias towards the wrong line in politics, but from his errors benefits ensued. The cause of representative government owes much to him accidentally ; for, had he not made the House of Commons four times expel Wilkes after having been four times elected by Middlesex ; had he not compelled the same House to declare the Court candidate, who was not chosen, the sitting member ; the exclusive rights of electors to choose their own representatives might never have been vindicated. It was due also to his action in the matter that public meetings became political customs, in the summer of 1769. (*Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 93.)

When on May 14, 1770, Lord Chatham moved an address to the King to dissolve Parliament and call a fresh one, the King declared to General Conway that he would abdicate sooner. Laying his hand on his sword, he said : " I will have recourse to this sooner than yield to a dissolution." (*ib.* ii. 179.)

The system reduced most politicians to such a state of thraldom that it became impossible to reach the royal mind with counsels of moderation. This showed itself with specially fatal effects in the war with the American colonies. It may be that, looked at from the world's point of view, their loss was not the misfortune that contemporaries thought. But in any case the King, or rather Constitutional Monarchy, must bear a large share of the blame ; for the King was personally no more in the wrong than most of his contemporaries. " There is no man," wrote Lord Rockingham in December 1776, " who has integrity and magnanimity of mind sufficient to enable him to go and say to His Majesty, The measures and policy of the Ministers towards America are erroneous ; the adherence to them is destruction." (*ib.* ii. 303.) Yet the King, though the thought of American independence filled him with the fear of his country falling

"into a very low class among the European States," told Shelburne later how much he felt the dismemberment of the Empire, and how miserable he would be if he did not feel that no blame for it could be laid at his door; and, as he added with some humour, "did I not also know that knavery seems to be so much the striking feature of the inhabitants that it may not in the end be an evil that they will become aliens to this kingdom." (Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, ii. 203.)

The result of the attempt to do away with party government may be summed up in Walpole's words, who describes "all parties as so jumbled and so prostituted that no shadow of principles remained in any party; nor could any man say which faction was Whig or Tory. The Crown was humbled and disgraced; the people were sold." (*Last Journals*, ii. 528.)

Nor should the effect of all this instability on our foreign relations be forgotten. In 1766 both the King and Chatham were desirous of making an alliance with Prussia and Russia, like that of the Seven Years' War time, but Prussia held back, owing in part, according to Lord Shelburne, to "the great fluctuations of administration for some time past." (*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 91.) When Sir Andrew Mitchell, in an audience with the King of Prussia, tried to reassure him of the stability of the Chatham Government, that monarch replied that he wished it might be so, but that till he saw more stability in our administration, he did not choose any further connections with us. (*ib.* iii. 142.) Which proves that the instability of foreign policy so generally held to be a vice of democracies may be just as pronounced under certain forms of monarchy; having been actually a political reproach to us in the early years of George III.

CHAPTER II

Lord Bute, the Favourite

Great as is the debt of gratitude which this country owes to Lord Bute for having freed it at last from the Seven Years' War by the Peace of Paris in 1763, it cannot be forgotten that it was he who chiefly aided George III. in his attack on party government; and his story affords a good illustration of the malign influence often exercised over monarchs by favourites or personal friends behind the back of the responsible Ministry for the time being. The difficulty is one to which monarchies seem peculiarly liable, and one to which our own system has often shown itself liable since the days of Lord Bute.

The odd chance which brought Bute to the political surface shows the force of accident over mortal affairs. At the racecourse at Egham, when a shower of rain delayed the departure of the spectators, Frederick, Prince of Wales, desiring some one to make up a rubber at whist during the shower, invited Bute into his tent; and so began an intimacy with royalty which ended in bringing about the close relationship between Bute and the future George III. When George became King in 1760, Bute was made a Privy Councillor on October 27, and on November 15 he was made groom of the stole and gentleman of the Bedchamber. He had at the time no seat in Parliament, but for all that this groom of the stole became the King's real Prime Adviser behind and above the actual Minister of the day.

The Duke of Newcastle had been in political service for fifty years, and was chief Minister in the Parliament elected in 1761. But Lord Bute was the real Minister. He it was who had purposely delayed the issue of writs in order to have more time for securing seats for the personal adherents of the Crown. (Albemarle's *Memoirs of Rockingham*, i. 61.)

He it was who had selected Sir John Cust as Speaker "on account of his Tory politics." (*ib.* i. 69.) After Pitt had resigned in October 1761, it remained to Bute to rid himself of Newcastle. This he did by a process of systematic slights, so that we find the poor Duke thus writing to Lord Hardwicke on December 20, 1761: "In this situation I cannot, I will not go on to execute the most burthensome, the most difficult, the most responsible office in the whole kingdom without rightful concert, confidence, and communication; and that I desire my Lord Bute may be told." (*ib.* i. 104.) On February 17, 1762, he exclaims: "Is it possible for me to go on with this man?" (*ib.* i. 101); and on May 10, 1762, he complains of Bute's behaviour to him as hardly what any gentleman would show to the most insignificant.

On the 26th of that month Newcastle resigned, and Lord Bute took his place. In telling Lord Rockingham of the manner of his dismission the Duke writes: "The King did not drop one word of censure at my leaving him, nor even made me a polite compliment, after near fifty years' service, and devotion to the interest of his Royal family. I will say nothing more of myself, but that I believe never *any man* was so dismissed." (*ib.* i. 112.)

A few months later (October 28, 1762) we find him describing as "the most extraordinary event that has happened in any court of Europe" the dismission from the post of Lord Chamberlain of the Household of another "servant" of the Crown, the fourth Duke of Devonshire, who had preceded the Duke of Newcastle as Prime Minister from November 1756 to March 1757. The Duke went to St. James's and desired to speak with the King or Lord Bute. "The page came out and told the Duke that His Majesty had commanded to tell His Grace that he would not see him. The Duke then desired to know to whom His Majesty would have him deliver his staff. His Majesty sent him word by the same page that he would send his orders to the Duke of Devonshire. My Lord Duke has since been with my Lord Egremont, and has delivered to him his key and staff. I believe there never was such a behaviour to the first and best subject the King has." (*ib.* i. 136.) But this was not all, for on November 4 the King in Council "called for the

book, and with his own hand struck out the Duke of Devonshire's name from the list of Privy Councillors": which "shocking event," says Newcastle, "enraged, frightened, and alarmed everybody."

Bute was perfectly sincere and disinterested in his attachment to the King. Writing to Shelburne in October 1762, he speaks of "every wish of his soul holding to sacrifices of himself as nothing, if it procures any real advantage to my country, and to him who is also my King, my Master, and my Friend." And "had I ever been weak enough to ambition such trifles (as titles, etc.), all that the Crown could possibly bestow has been certainly within my grasp ever since the King's accession." He admired Henry Fox for standing with him in supporting "the best of Princes against the most ungenerous, the most ungrateful set of men this country ever produced." When writing of the King, he often lapsed into the use of the capital H as in: "I own I feel for *H*im, I know you do; I wish all who serve *H*im did the same." (November 3, 1762.) So also did Henry Fox: *H*im, *H*is, *H*imself, in a letter to Bute of March 27, 1763; as if there was some unconscious tendency at that time to the deification of the monarch. In any case Bute wished to make the monarchy a reality. "Have we really monarchy in this kingdom," he writes to Shelburne, "or is there only a puppet dressed out with regal robes to serve the purposes of every interested man; who at every turn is to be buffeted at pleasure?"

The mode of working is well shown in connection with the famous political proscription of 1762, when Fox, writing to Bute, says: "Strip the Duke of Newcastle of his three Lieutenancies immediately. I'll answer for the good effect of it, and then go on to the general rout. . . . In regard to their numerous dependants in Crown employments, it behoves your lordship in particular to leave none of them. Their connections spread very wide, and every one of them, their relations and friends, is in his heart your enemy. They all think themselves secure, and many talk with their own mouths, all by those of their relations and acquaintances, against your lordship. Turn the tables, and you will immediately have thousands who will think the safety of themselves

or their friends depends on your lordship, and will therefore be sincere and active friends." (Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 137.)

And so it was done. Not only were the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Halifax, and Lord Rockingham deprived of their Lord-Lieutenancies as the Duke of Devonshire had been driven to resign his, but "every relative, friend, or dependant of the Duke of Newcastle was, one after the other, turned out of his office, and their proscription extended even to the offices of Customs and Excise" (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 152)—a proceeding justly characterised by the Duke of Devonshire as "cruel, unjust, and unheard of." Even men holding "such humble situations as doorkeepers were thrust out" of their posts. The Duke of Newcastle called it "the most cruel and inhuman list that was ever seen, not only in a free country, but even in any civilised nation." But there is always another side to such episodes, and it appears that many of these officials, not believing that Bute's reign would last, and expecting soon to be back under their old master, the Duke of Newcastle, behaved to Bute with marked incivility. And in cases where the proscribed were real objects of compassion, Bute gave them other places equal in value to those of which they had been deprived. (*Rigby to the Duke of Bedford* in the *Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 186, 187, February 3, 1763.)

His contemporaries hated Bute with special rancour. He was more vilified and caricatured than any one; his very life was not safe in the streets. But posterity may look upon him with more indulgence. The quarrelling Whig aristocracy over which he wished the King to rule had no strong claim to popular affection, and it had landed the country in a war with France and Spain, which, under Pitt and Newcastle, seemed destined to be eternal. Bute succeeded in making peace with both France and Spain (February 10, 1763), and his policy of disconnecting this country from German politics must also be placed to the credit of his memory. It is quite possible that with a stronger pupil than George III. Bute's career might not have proved so unsuccessful and inglorious as many historians declare it to have been.

As it was, during all the early years of the reign the country was in one prolonged crisis of shifting ministries, and political mutability became such a feature of the country that even a Frenchman could say in mockery that the instability of English politics was a reflex of the instability of the surrounding sea. But what chance had a Minister of carrying out a consistent or definite policy under such conditions? What could be done with a King whose apparent chief Minister was not his real one, and whose policy was directed by the mind behind the screen? The Memoirs of the time show the frantic and futile efforts by which successive Premiers tried to shake themselves free of this incubus.

Grenville, on succeeding to Bute in April 1763, stipulated with the King that Bute should never "publicly or privately intermeddle with any business whatever" (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 214), and Bute on September 4, 1763, speaks of himself as "having absolutely abandoned all thoughts of interfering more in business, having seen every honest wish and endeavour, every action in his life, turned in the most false and cruel light." (Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, i. 207.) A few weeks later, on September 20, he wrote: "I protest on the word of a gentleman I know no more of politics, of the King, or the Ministers' ideas than I do of the Mogul's Court." (*ib.* i. 209.) But a plot to oust Grenville from office seems to have continued during most of the two years that he held it.

In August 1763 there was a fierce intrigue to get Pitt to supersede him, and when another similar plot occurred in May 1765, Pitt and Lord Temple both expressed their determination to form no Ministry whilst Bute's power continued. (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 41, 226.) Pitt would have nothing to do with a change of Government unless Bute's banishment were made a condition precedent. (May 20, 1765, *ib.* iii. 173.) In the same month of political crisis we find Grenville complaining bitterly to the King of the adverse influence of Bute and the King's uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and insisting with vigour against either of them having anything to do with the Government. (*ib.* iii. 179, 180, 183.) One of his conditions for his Cabinet's

remaining in office was the King's authorisation to say that: "Lord Bute had nothing to say in His Majesty's Councils in any manner or shape whatever."

In the following month, on June 12, 1765, Lord Grenville, in company with Lords Sandwich and Halifax and the Duke of Bedford, went to the King and read a remonstrance, which it took an hour to read, against this system; but the only effect was that the King declared on their departure that, had he not broken out into a profuse perspiration, he must have suffocated from indignation. The next month, on July 8, the Duke of Bedford in a letter to Grenville (*Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 212) brushed aside all these plots as "childish transactions," and expressed his disbelief in any ministry being formed which was constructed "on no better foundation than the support of Lord Bute's favouritism." But two days later Grenville received orders to surrender the seals of office.

The worst side of the story is that all the time that this underhand plotting was going on, the King was repeatedly assuring his Minister of his confidence and friendship, as on October 20, 1763, when he told his Minister that he spoke to him "with an openness and confidence with which he spoke to no other of his servants"; or on February 26, 1764, when he told him that he knew the difference between him and his other servants; "they have many purposes to serve, you have none but my service and that of the public." (*Grenville Papers*, ii. 217, 493.) But the system clearly demanded a tactfulness on the part of the monarch which tended to shade off into duplicity.

Jenkinson (later Lord Liverpool) denied at the time that Bute had brought the change of Ministry about, but it was admitted that the King wrote him a journal every day of passing events, and as minute a one as if "your boy at school was directed by you to write his journal to you." (*Jenkinson to Grenville, ib.* iii. 220, November 1765.)

Rightly or wrongly Bute's hand was seen behind everything. To him the Duke of Bedford attributed the three days' riot which occurred in May 1765, when the mob, for his having caused the rejection in the Lords of a measure for the relief of the Spitalfields weavers from French com-

petition, sought to destroy Bedford House and murder its owner, and would probably have done both but for protection by the Military. And when the King tried to assure him to the contrary, the Duke persisted that it was so.

In October 1778 Bute's son, Lord Mountstuart, published in the papers a letter in which he said that Lord Bute on his solemn word of honour authorised him to declare that since the Duke of Cumberland had consulted him about a new Ministry in 1765 to that date he had not waited on the King except at a levée or Drawing-room, and that he had never offered his advice or opinion about offices or measures, directly or indirectly, by himself or any other. But the impression of contemporary letters was certainly to the effect that his influence survived 1765. On January 3, 1766, when Lord Rockingham's Ministry was enjoying a fitful life, we find Lord Hardwicke writing to C. Yorke, his brother, "Lord Bute will overturn any Ministry who do not court him, and yet they most all disclaim him by turns. The King should banish him." And the conversation recorded between Bute and Wedderburn in connection with the mysterious intrigue of July 1767 shows that Bute's political influence was by no means dead even then. (*Grenville Papers*, iv. 120, 114.) "It is of very little importance," wrote W. G. Hamilton to Lord Temple on July 29, 1767, "what are the Duke of Grafton's sentiments, and still less what are his Lordship's (Lord Chatham's), provided Bute continues of the mind he seems to be in at present." (*ib.* iv. 116.)

Lord Rockingham in a letter to the Duke of Portland on September 15, 1767, claimed as one of the titles of his Ministry to popular approval their "steady and unalterable determination of ever resisting and attempting to restrain the power and influence of Lord Bute." (*Memoirs*, ii. 57, 58.)

It is difficult to reconcile all this contemporary belief with the story told to Greville by the Duke of York: that the last time George III. ever saw Bute was in the pavilion at Kew in 1764, when Bute is said to have violently attacked the King for abandoning and neglecting him. Whereupon the King declared he would never correspond with him

again except through his Ministers; Bute said he would never see him again; and so they parted in anger. (*Memoirs*, i. 86.)

But it is immaterial when precisely Bute's influence came to an end. His career serves to illustrate the baneful effect of the conflict of views and instability of policy which is bound to ensue when the chief Minister advises one policy and the chief friend another: a state of things which has a strong natural affinity with constitutional monarchy. But before parting with Bute it seems only fair to let him speak for himself, as he did in a letter inviting the Duke of Bedford to become President of the Council, on April 2, 1763: "When the Duke of Newcastle went out, and I found myself under the necessity to accept my present situation, I did it with the utmost reluctance; and nothing but the King's safety and independence could have made me acquiesce in a way of life so opposite to my feelings; nor did I kiss the King's hand till I had received his solemn promise to go out when peace was once established. Thanks to a kind Providence and Your Grace's abilities that day is now come, and well it is so, for . . . the state of my health is weak, and any constant application to business is declared to be so fatal to me that I find myself under the unpleasant necessity of putting my much-loved sovereign in mind of his promise. I have done so, and after scenes that I can never forget, his tenderness for me has got the better of his partiality to my poor endeavours to serve him, and he approves of my determination." The King, he added, had decided to appoint Grenville in his place, and had fixed on three principles to govern his reign:

1. Never to suffer to enter his service any of the Ministers who had tried to fetter and enslave George II.;

2. To collect every other force, above all that of Bedford and H. Fox, into his councils;

3. To show all proper countenance to every gentleman acting on Whig principles, and on those principles only supporting his Government.

Bute went on: "Far be it from me to think I am in any shape necessary to the King's Government or that my place cannot be even much better supplied by any other arrange-

ment, but I do not stop here. I am firmly of opinion that my retirement will remove the only unpopular part of Government. . . . I fondly hope I shall in my retiring do my royal master much more service than I could have performed by continuing in office." (*Bedford Correspondence*, ii. 223–6.)

One takes leave of Bute after this letter with more charity than the orthodox historians sanction. The private life to which he retired yielded him more happiness than the public one he forsook. There is something pathetic in his complaint that he had found his enemies so inveterate and his friends so lukewarm in political life that, had he but £50 a year, he would retire on bread and water and deem it luxury compared with the sufferings he had found in the political field. Nor was his experience peculiar. For at least three other Prime Ministers felt the same joy in their escape from politics. Lord Shelburne, after his fall in 1763, described himself as "intoxicated with liberty." Sir Robert Peel, after his final defeat and fall, finding himself on July 4, 1846, alone with Lady Peel "in the loveliest weather," was conscious of every disposition to forgive his enemies for having conferred on him "the blessing of the loss of power." (*Memoirs*, ii. 310.) And when Lord Russell, defeated on his Reform Bill in the summer of 1866, quitted power for ever, his wife described him as "so well and happy" that her joy at his release became greater every hour: there was a "sense of repose that could hardly be described." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 421.)

But Bute's attempt to release his Royal master and friend from the shackles of party government, by exalting the Royal prerogative at the cost of Parliament, was not an encouraging example for successors who might dare to venture on the same dangerous path. Nevertheless many since his time have tried to remove or lighten those shackles, and many doubtless will so try in the future.

CHAPTER III

George III. and the Fourth Duke of Bedford

Among the statesmen with whom George III. came into much interesting and instructive contact was John, fourth Duke of Bedford, who was forty-one at the King's accession and who had recently resigned the Viceroyalty of Ireland. He is credited with the perhaps venial sin of having preferred cricket to politics, but in any case he played that leading and honourable part in the politics of his day for which cricket is thought so admirable a preparation. His great merit lies in his having shared Bute's endeavour to make peace with France and in having ultimately succeeded in effecting it. His wish for peace also coincided with the King's, but it required courage to oppose Pitt, whose conduct of the war had been so triumphant. Rigby wrote to the Duke on April 22, 1761, begging him from the Duke of Newcastle to attend at the next day's Council on the peace: "Nobody dare speak their mind but yourself, and the country is undone if you are bullied out of your peaceable dispositions;" the rest were afraid of Pitt, and the Duke of Newcastle wanted Bedford to stand the brunt of a resentment that applied to both of them. (*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 6.)

The Family Compact between France and Spain, which so fatally disturbed the negotiations for peace in 1761, put an end to Pitt's interest in effecting a peace, and on October 5, 1761, he resigned office, because he could not carry the Cabinet with him in a declaration of war against Spain. But the war continued under the Duke of Newcastle, who in his turn resigned on May 26, 1762. The Duke of Bedford succeeded Lord Temple as Privy Seal. And, despite Pitt's retirement, the war continued to be marked by signal successes both under Newcastle and under Lord Bute, who succeeded him; but Bute at once set the ship of state full sail to peace, and in

September 1762 sent the Duke of Bedford as ambassador to Paris. Peace had few friends among the influential classes of those times, and the Duke incurred for his advocacy of it all the unpopularity that befell Lord Bute. He was hissed in the streets of London as he went to France, and the reproach of the peace, of which the preliminaries were arranged on November 3, 1762, and which was signed on February 10, 1763, clung to him for years. So late as Sunday, June 30, 1769, when he rode from Exeter to Honiton, so war-intoxicated still were the people from the successes of the Seven Years' War that the crowd of the Devonshire townlet received the Duke with groanings and hissings and cries of "the Peacemaker"; and, as he rode on later, near twenty bulldogs were set at his horse, two of them for a long time being under the horse's nose, whilst under a shower of stones from the mob "the Peacemaker" galloped away. (Preface, *Bedford Correspondence*, vol. iii. p. lxxix.)

In 1761 the English fleet, under Admiral Keppel, had captured the small island of Belleisle, which is to the coast of Normandy what the Isle of Wight is to that of Dorsetshire. In the negotiations for peace some disposition was shown on the English side to retain Belleisle. The Duke, writing to Lord Bute, thus expressed his views on the subject: "Let any Briton lay his hand upon his breast and say whether, let the distress of this country be ever so great, he could put his hand to the peace which should cede the Isle of Wight to France. If this is the case, let us do as we would be done by, the most golden rule, as well as what relates to the public as to private life, and I believe always ought to be observed as well in good policy as in good conscience." (*ib.* iii. 16.) No wonder the Devonshire mob attacked him with stones and bulldogs!

It raises Lord Bute in one's esteem that he should have been the recipient of such sentiments, and it goes far to explain his unpopularity among all classes. On November 25, 1762, there was a great celebration of the arrival of the ratifications of peace, and a large crowd filled the parks and streets to see the King's coach, and otherwise keep holiday. But the unlucky Bute, who had brought the peace about, was "very much insulted, hissed in a very gross manner, and a little

pelted," and, on his return from the House, the mob broke the glasses of his chair, and put him in danger of his life. (*ib.* iii. 160, *Rigby to the Duke*, November 26, 1762.)

Grievances arose between Bute and the Duke during the embassy to Paris, and when, after sundry abortive intrigues following Bute's resignation, the Duke became President of the Council in the Ministry of George Grenville, there was a stipulation with the King that Bute should have nothing to do with the Government; a stipulation, however, that does not seem to have been kept. In May 1765 the Spitalfield weavers rose in their wrath against the lowering of the price of silk by foreign competition, and a Bill for protection against it was opposed by the Duke on the principles of free trade. For this he paid dearly, for it required a force of a hundred infantry and thirty-six cavalry to protect Bedford House and possibly its owner from the fury of the mob; and behind all this the Duke fancied he perceived the malevolent hand of his former colleague. Meantime the King was determined, if possible, to rid himself of his Ministers, more especially of the Duke, whom he could not forgive for having voted for the exclusion of the King's mother from any share in a possible Regency. The Duke of Cumberland was commissioned to negotiate with Pitt, Temple, the Duke of Newcastle, and Bute. Grenville and the Duke of Bedford confronted the King with their suspicions about Bute; asked him his intentions about a change of Government; and pointed out to him "how very unfaithfully the conditions about Bute had been kept with them." To all which His Majesty vouchsafed no satisfactory answer.

Then, when the negotiation with Pitt failed, as negotiations were apt to do with that impracticable statesman, the King had to suffer the humiliation of falling back on the Grenville Ministers whom he had tried to shake off. But they were now in a position to make terms. The King had to give his word not to see Lord Bute; he had to consent to deprive his brother, Stuart Mackenzie, of the office of Privy Seal for Scotland, though the King had promised it him for life. "I will not throw my kingdom into confusion," he said. "You force me to break my word and must be responsible for the consequences." (*ib.* iii. 283, 284.)

The Duke gave the Duke of Marlborough a vivid account of this interview with the King in a letter of June 13, 1765. They had asked the King whether he had not promised his support and countenance to his Ministers ; whether that promise had been kept ; or whether, on the contrary, all their most bitter enemies had not been countenanced by him in public ; whether Lord Bute's representing his Ministers to him in a bad light by himself or his emissaries was not an interference in public counsels, and whether the favourite's interference did not imperil the King's quiet and the public safety. When the King denied that Bute had been consulted, the Duke prayed that his authority and favour and countenance should go together, and that, if that was impossible, he should give his authority to others. There was no lack of outspokenness. Rightly or wrongly, the King was charged with a breach of his word.

A few days later we find the Duke writing to Grenville, advocating a union between him and Pitt as " the only means of extricating the King and the public out of the labyrinth of national shame and confusion into which the iniquity and folly of Lord Bute had plunged them, and to which the weakness (to say no more) of the King had too much contributed. To prevent this happening for the future, a total exclusion of Lord Bute from the King's counsels and presence for ever seemed necessary, and a total removal of all his friends from their employments either about the King's person or elsewhere." (*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 299.) But the next month (July 1765) the King settled the matter by dismissing the Grenville Ministry.

The whole story throws into strong relief one of the evils which seems to be hardly separable from constitutional monarchy ; the evil arising from the inevitable personal preferences of the King in the choice of his Ministers and the support accorded to them. The depths to which the country fell in consequence of so difficult a system is admitted on the unimpeachable testimony of the Duke of Bedford. A republican form of government has its own peculiar disadvantages, but if it does not lend itself so easily, by the influence of personal favourites, to that flagrant opposition between the head of the Executive and the Ministry which so frequently

distracted the reign of George III., the advantage from this aspect would seem to rest with that form of government. Yet the cynic's aphorism must be borne in mind, that the chief excellence of any form of government lies in the possibility of another being worse.

CHAPTER IV

The Year of Lord Rockingham

The story George III. told Lord Ashburton in 1783 of the dismissal of George Grenville from power is a curious one. It was that he was induced to quarrel with Grenville by the Duke of Cumberland; that the Duke had deceived him as to the possibility of forming a Ministry with Pitt, who would have nothing to do with the Duke. The Duke then introduced Lord Rockingham, "who never appeared to have a decided opinion about anything." This step was the only one with which the King saw reason to reproach himself in the past.

It was a great misfortune; for had Pitt come into power in 1765 instead of a year later, America might never have been lost to us. There were some good arguments for the introduction of the fatal Stamp Act by the Grenville Government on March 8, 1764, but the disastrous consequences in America clearly indicated the necessity of its repeal. It is said that Pitt forced this repeal upon Rockingham, but in any case its repeal was a courageous line for the Rockingham Ministry to take, considering the wound to the national pride involved in such an admission of error. And had it not been attended by the Declaratory Act, asserting the abstract right to tax the colonies, all might have been well. For it was this Declaratory Act that rankled in America. It was what, according to Lord George Germaine, "galled them the most." (North, *Correspondence*, ii. 131, February 5, 1778.)

Lord Camden said that in England "nearly everybody but himself held the Declaratory Act as a sacred fundamental never to be departed from." (*Grafton*, 216.) Pitt was one of the minority, and it was the Government's refusal to yield on this point that caused the negotiations of January 1766 to add Pitt to the Ministry to break down. There is no doubt that Pitt's inclusion in the Cabinet would

have much strengthened the Rockingham Government, but that great statesman's conduct throughout these months was in the highest degree regrettable.

Burke, then Lord Rockingham's secretary, wrote in later life a striking panegyric of the Ministry of Lord Rockingham, which lasted from July 1765 to July 1766: "With the Earl of Bute they had no personal connection, no correspondence of councils. They neither courted him nor persecuted him. They practised no corruption, nor were they even suspected of it. They sold no offices. They obtained no reversions or pensions, either coming in or going out, for themselves, their families, or their dependants."

Liberal feeling favoured the repeal of the Stamp Act, whilst Tory feeling opposed it. But the chief difficulty was with the King. In a conversation with Lord Harcourt the King declared himself strongly in favour of asserting the right of Great Britain to impose the tax, and opposed to its repeal, though he thought there might be some modification of it. Lord Harcourt suggested that if the King would let that opinion be known it might prevent the repeal, if his Ministers pushed the measure. But to this the King seemed averse, saying that he would never influence people in their Parliamentary opinion, and that he had promised to support his Ministers. (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 353, January 30, 1766.) The same opinion he expressed to the Duke of York, but laid down the sound doctrine that "when a measure is once before Parliament, it must abide the decision of Parliament"; that it would be unconstitutional and improper for him to interfere, though his sentiments were as strong as ever against repeal. (*ib.* iii. 371, February 19.) But he failed to act up to this high doctrine. He tried to support and to frustrate his Ministers at the same time. Rockingham's remonstrances with him were both bold and frequent. "The Ministers were disgusted at the notorious treachery of the Court, and remonstrated with the King on the behaviour of his servants." (Walpole, *George III.*, 288.) And when, at a critical period in the passage of the Bill, Lord Strange, after an interview with the King, "trumpeted all over the town" that the Government owed their large majority on a division to the false assertions

they had made of the King's support of repeal, Rockingham extorted from his slippery master three memoranda in the royal hand of his submission to repeal as preferable to the enforcement of the Stamp Act. There seems no doubt that the Royal opinion was freely used to prevent the Bill from passing. But when it had passed the Commons in March 1766 the King told Lord Mansfield that a very improper use had been made of his name, as he thought it unconstitutional for his name to be mentioned "as a means to sway any man's opinion in any business which was before Parliament." (April 9, 1766, *Grenville Papers*, iii. 374.) The episode shows the practical impossibility of any monarch's playing that absolutely passive rôle which is attributed to him by the theory of the Constitution.

How difficult the situation was is shown by the remark of the second Lord Hardwicke in his "Memoriall": "From the personal inclination of the King, and influenced by Lord Bute and the Princess Dowager, the followers of Court favour went the other way, and half the Court at least voted in opposition to Administration." (*ib.* iii. 250.)

Both sides made what capital they could of the King's opinion, in a way which in our freer age seems surprising. The Bill, having passed the Commons, was approaching the more difficult passage of the House of Lords, and this is part of the letter which the Duke of Newcastle saw fit to write to Lord Rockingham. He suggests that the Minister should "humbly represent to His Majesty that if His Majesty would be graciously pleased to signify to his Lords of the Bedchamber and his servants, at the time of his dressing or after his levée, that His Majesty wished the repeal and thought for his service that it should be done, it would certainly be carried without difficulty." He feared that otherwise the Opposition would be successful. And if Rockingham thought that the writer's humble opinion and that of Lords Albemarle, Bessborough, and Grantham would have any weight with His Majesty, they were willing that it should be "submitted with the utmost deference to His Majesty's consideration." There was so much industry, he added, in propagating everything that made against them

that His Majesty's own inclination upon such an occasion could not be too well known. (*ib.* iii. 292.)

Ultimately the Repeal of the Stamp Act, after the usual difficulties, received the Royal assent: a measure of conciliation which reflects lasting credit on the Rockingham Ministry, and which for the time allayed the agitation in America. But from the hour of its repeal, says Nicholls, the King determined to get rid of Rockingham. The usual intriguing with different statesmen went on, and in July 1766 Rockingham resigned. He told Nicholls that the King never showed him such distinguished marks of kindness as after he had secretly resolved to remove him. (*Rockingham Memoirs*, i. 346.)

It is to expect a miracle to expect a constitutional monarch to feel cordial friendship for a Minister to whose policy he is opposed, or to conceal altogether feelings of personal antipathy. George strove his utmost to make the best of an impossible relationship, as his successors have done since. But the attempt told on his mind long before the conduct and opposition of the Prince of Wales aggravated the trouble. He had more political sympathy with George Grenville than with Rockingham, but his personal antipathy to him was stronger. "I would rather see the devil in my closet than Mr. Grenville," he once said to Col. Fitzroy; and to Lord Hertford: "I would sooner meet Grenville at the point of the sword than let him into my closet." (*ib.* ii. 50.) Yet to Grenville himself he generally expressed the strongest attachment.

No wonder that on December 13, 1767, we find Lord Mansfield lamenting with Grenville over "the sad disordered state of things in general, and the languid turn of the King's mind, who seemed indifferent to everything, tired of change, and yet dissatisfied with the Ministers and their Administration." Lord Mansfield even looked to Bute as a possible saviour of a tottering State. He blamed Bute "for standing still at so critical a moment, after having inspired the King with general mistrust of everybody, and with ideas that frequent changes of men, in order to break all parties, was the wisest plan of Government." For though Bute now intermeddled but little with politics, he still exerted in-

fluence over the royal mind, and therefore Lord Mansfield found fault with him for "not interposing that influence to put some spirit and activity into a weak, insufficient system, which by slow degrees was bringing the kingdom to its ruin." (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 239.) A Constitution which drove so many statesmen to despair of the State must have had more flecks in it than were apparent to the eyes of the King.

CHAPTER V

The King's Servants

The evolution of our political ideas is in nothing shown more clearly than in the habitual modern use of the word "Ministers"—a word that has become universal in republics as well as in monarchies. It means, of course, a servant, but no one now would any more talk of His Majesty's Ministers as his servants than he would think of calling his valet his minister. The words have come to carry different associations. But in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the highest statesmen were but servants of the King; not yet servants of the nation. In writing to one another they more often spoke of themselves as the King's servants than as his Ministers. A meeting of the Cabinet was a meeting of His Majesty's servants. (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 15.) Comparing the servants at Stowe with those of the King, Augustus Hervey wrote to Grenville on October 12, 1765: "I wish the master of a certain very great family had the art of conducting his as well; then should we see order restored instead of confusion, respect instead of flattery, and efficiency in the place of inability. If ever that happy change returns, it must be brought about by yourself, the only able upper Servant that can, in our distresses, direct the whole." (*ib.* iii. 89, 90.)

The Prime Minister, as we should now call him, was in fact the King's chief upper servant—a sort of political butler. And the King not only regarded, but treated him as such. The King thus writes to his chief servant on May 21, 1765: "Mr. Grenville, I am surprised that you are not yet come, when you know it was my orders to be attended this evening. I expect you therefore to come the moment you receive this." The King's leave was necessary for the shortest absence from town. On March 29, 1765, His Majesty

graciously gave Grenville leave to go out of town for the Easter holidays; on June 14 Grenville "renewed his desire to go into the country, to which the King said: 'Yes'"; on June 12 the Duke of Bedford "went into the Closet to ask leave to go out of town." But the positions were beginning to be reversed, for on May 24, 1765, we find the King himself asking leave of Grenville to go into the country for a night for fresh air, and Grenville said: "By all means," and hoped it would do him good. (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 190.)

It must be admitted that servants like Grenville or the Duke of Bedford often addressed their august master in language the reverse of servile; of this the *Grenville Papers* afford abundant evidence; but the relationship itself, and the insecure tenure of service, tended to be demoralising as well as to enhance the power of the Crown, as is well shown in a remark of the Duke of Richmond to Lord Rockingham in 1781: "When I say the Ministry I mean the King; for his servants are the merest servants that ever were." (Buckingham's *Court and Cabinets of George III.*, i. 23.)

But the position of mastery even then was not an easy one for the monarch to sustain, and on July 10, 1765, we find him complaining to Grenville that when anything was proposed to him "it was no longer as counsel, but what he was to *obey*." At that word Grenville started, and "said he did not know how to repeat it; that surely His Majesty could not mean that word to him, who knew that there was not that power on earth in whom His Majesty ought to acknowledge superiority, but that it was the duty of his servants, sworn to that purpose, to deliver their opinions to him upon such things as were expedient for his government." (*Grenville Papers*, iii. 213.)

The Ministers of George III., from habitually speaking of themselves as his servants, soon came to regard themselves as virtually his slaves. They stooped to language of the utmost servility before a majesty which, as the only source of place and honour, became to them a divinity on earth. The Royal Closet, their divinity's shrine, came to be viewed with such feelings of adoration that they came to speak of the Closet as we now speak of the Crown. It seemed indeed likely that "the Closet" would have become

a synonym for "the Crown," or have even superseded it altogether. Thus the political literature of the time teems with such expressions as the following:

"Indeed, my Lord, the Closet is firm, and there is nothing to fear," writes Lord Chatham to the Duke of Grafton on November 26, 1766. (Grafton's *Autobiography*, 107.) "I did not trouble the Closet," writes Lord Northington to Grafton on June 11, 1767. (*ib.* 175.) "We lost a support in the Closet which we all felt," writes Grafton. (*ib.* 61.) And again: "The support which has not come cordially from the Closet." (*ib.* 72.) The Duke of Richmond writes of "a success in the Closet" (*Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 61); Lord Lyttleton of "credit in the Closet" (*Grenville Papers*, iv. 361); Lord Bristol of "the favour of the Closet." (*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 241.) This had become the customary way of speaking of the Crown or Monarch.

The efforts of the elder Pitt, who was created Lord Chatham on becoming Privy Seal and chief Minister in 1766, on behalf of the freedom of election and freedom of petition have endeared his memory to all lovers of liberty. The eighteenth century produced no more independent spirit. Yet his abasement before royalty was amazing. Burke, writing of him to Lord Rockingham in 1774, says: "The least peep into the Closet intoxicates him, and will to the end of his life." (*Rockingham Memoirs*, ii. 260.) In his dealings with the Closet, the great statesman's contemporaries found a never-failing source of mirth. A wag declared that at a levée he would make so low a bow that from behind you could see the tip of his hooked nose between his legs. The reverence he displayed to royalty came within visible distance of worship, and helps one to understand the apotheosis of the Roman emperors. And in word as well as in action this abasement before royalty showed itself. It was partly a phrase of the time to be "laid at somebody's feet." Thus Lord Tavistock, writing to his father, the Duke of Bedford, at Paris, requests to be laid by him at the feet of the Princesse de Conté. (*Bedford Correspondence*, iii. 315.) Three times the Duke himself begged Lord Egremont to "lay him at the King's feet" (*ib.* 149, 159, 172), just as on November 17, 1757, as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he wrote to Pitt,

then Prime Minister, entreating through the same channel to be laid at the feet of George II. with regard to resigning or continuing his government. "I desire to be laid at the King's feet as one that out of office will be as zealous as in," wrote Lord Northington to the Duke of Grafton on July 20, 1767. (Grafton's *Autobiography*, 150.) And even Wilkes entreated the Duke "to lay him with all humility at the King's feet" on November 1, 1766. (*ib.* 193.)

But Lord Chatham carried the use of this conventional phrase to an absurdity. During nearly the whole time of his administration between 1766 and 1770 gout rendered him incapable of political work, nor could anything exceed the natural and sincere sympathy of the King for his ailing servant, against whose wish to resign he fought with the utmost patience. To letters of this sort from the King, Lord Chatham would reply, as on June 15, 1767: "Lord Chatham most humbly begs leave to lay himself with all duty and submission at the King's feet, utterly unable to express what he feels from the most condescending and most gracious mark of His Majesty's infinite goodness, in deigning to bestow a thought upon the health of a devoted servant. . . . Under the deepest sense of the grace and consolation extended to him by his most gracious royal master, he prostrates himself before His Majesty's goodness." (*Chatham Correspondence*, iii. 273, 274.)

On March 7, 1767, he again writes: "Lord Chatham most humbly begs to lay himself at the King's feet, and wants words to convey to His Majesty his duty, submission, and devotion, and how deeply he is penetrated with the exceeding condescension and transcending goodness of His Majesty." (*ib.* iii. 230.)

But even loyalty and gout together should hardly reduce a man to such language as this. The letters in the *Chatham Correspondence* are couched in a tone hardly pardonable in one poor mortal addressing another. Surely the King might have inquired after the health of his chief Minister and the most illustrious statesman of his day without any call for such extravagant gratitude. It shows the advance then making for despotism that a statesman like Lord Chatham should have commonly begun his letters by the offer of his

body to be kicked and trampled on by his royal master. In one of his speeches he complains of the riches of Asia having flooded the country with Asiatic luxury and Asiatic principles of government. (*ib.* iii. 405.) And with justice; for his own language is the best proof of the Asiatic feeling about monarchy which at the time threatened to convert an English constitutional King into an Oriental despot.

It is melancholy to record the King's later attitude to Lord Chatham. On August 9, 1775, he wrote to Lord North that, though he would not suffer Chatham's family to suffer for their father's conduct, he could do nothing for them till the father was quite off the public stage, lest his doing so should be ascribed to fear. "His political conduct the last winter was so abandoned that he must in the eyes of the dispassionate have totally undone the merit of his former conduct;" it was absurd to expect any gratitude from the King or his family; "but when decrepitude or death puts an end to him as a tempest of sedition, I shall make no difficulty of placing the second son's name instead of the father and making up the pension £3000." (North, *Correspondence*, i. 260.) And the King expressed himself as "rather surprised" when Parliament unanimously voted Chatham a public funeral and a monument at Westminster Abbey. He hoped it was for having roused the nation in the last war; otherwise, "this compliment, if paid to his general conduct, was rather an offensive measure to himself personally." (May 12, 1778, *ib.* ii. 184.)

To some extent the expressions varied with the mood of the writer, as in the correspondence between the King and Lord North after the latter's resignation in March 1782. The King wrote on April 18 to complain of the Secret Service account-books not having been made up beyond April 5. It was "the most shameful piece of neglect I ever knew. No business can ever be admitted as an excuse for not doing that." He also expressed surprise at the "immense expense of the General Election" of 1780. Lord North answered like a whipped schoolboy. "Lord North, with a heart full of the deepest affliction at having incurred His Majesty's displeasure, humbly throws himself at His Majesty's feet, and implores his attention to a few words that he presumes to offer in ex-

planation of the delay of the accounts, etc." The King was softened; Lord North could not be surprised "that a mind truly tore to pieces should make me less attentive to my expressions." But there was no more prostration after this episode. On November 4, 1782, it is "Lord North has the honour of informing His Majesty, etc." (*Correspondence*, ii. 421–7, 433.)

Sir George Rose, the great friend of the younger Pitt, felt such indignation at the substitution of Addington for Pitt as Prime Minister in 1801 that he told Pitt on February 5 that in his opinion Addington "should have thrown himself at the King's feet and assured him of the absolute impossibility of his undertaking the government." And again on February 18 he repeated the phrase as expressive of the duty clearly incumbent on the man whom his contemporaries, from his father's calling, nicknamed the "Doctor." (Rose's *Diaries*, i. 292, 309.)

A letter from Lord Shelburne to the King, dated April 16, 1782, shows a tendency to break away from this epistolary servility; for it begins with "Sir," and ends "with the most respectful attachment Your Majesty's dutiful and devoted servant." (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 108.) And none of the letters of William Pitt to the King, printed in the Appendices of Stanhope's *Life of Pitt*, show any trace of his father's abasement. But Burke, in writing to Pitt on August 31, 1794, to thank the King for a liberal gift of money from the Civil List, begged him "to be so kind as to lay him with all possible humility, duty, and gratitude at His Majesty's feet." (*Stanhope*, ii. 246.) And Pitt, in a letter to the King of January 22, 1787, conveyed the Bishop of Peterborough's request that the offer of the Deanery of St. Paul's "might be laid at His Majesty's feet with every expression of duty and gratitude." (*ib.* Appendix XX.)

The phrase lingered into the next century and the next reign; as when Canning, refusing to join Lord Liverpool's Government, begged that Minister to "lay at the feet of the Prince Regent his humble and earnest prayer to be excused from accepting an office which by a sacrifice of public character must render him inefficient for the service of His Royal Highness' Government." (Bagot's *Canning*, i. 368,

March 18, 1812.) Again, we find Canning writing to George IV. in December 1820: "When in the month of June . . . I laid at Your Majesty's feet the tender of my resignation"; and on June 10, 1822, the Duke of Wellington, writing to the same master, alludes to circumstances which obliged him to forego the pleasure, which had always been so acceptable to his feelings, of throwing himself at His Majesty's feet. But the Duke did not always give himself this pleasure; his dispatches generally expressed nothing more than his duty as a subject and his devotion as a servant. And so it was with the Ministers of William IV. It was in his reign that it seems first to have dawned on Ministers to consider themselves rather the servants of the House of Commons or of the nation than of the Crown. (*Greville*, iii. 293, 371.) So that the evolution seems clear from the position of semi-slaves, prostrate at the King's feet, to that of Ministers on equal terms with him, or even of something like mastery over him.

As indicative of the change of tone that has occurred between those times and our own may be noticed the fact that in Queen Victoria's published Letters there is only one reference to the Closet (ii. 381); whilst the other phrase became so rare as to seem almost singular. Thus Lord Canning, on December 24, 1857, begged leave to lay at Her Majesty's feet the assurance of his dutiful attachment (*Queen's Letters*, iii. 329); Lord Ellenborough, on May 10, 1858, laid his resignation at Her Majesty's feet (*ib.* iii. 359); and in 1852 Mr. Disraeli, after the defeat of Lord Derby's first Government in 1852, laid at Her Majesty's feet his dutiful and grateful sense of her generous and indulgent kindness to himself as Chancellor of the Exchequer; adding, as regards Prince Albert, that he would ever remember with interest and admiration "the princely mind in the princely person." (*Life*, iii. 450.) But such phraseology became exceptional. With a loyalty to the Queen quite as sincere as his rival's, Mr. Gladstone used the simpler language which was better suited to the changed atmosphere of the world.

CHAPTER VI

Monarchy or Republic

A letter of Lord Shelburne, dated May 18, 1770, accused the Government of wishing to establish a Royal despotism at home and in America, and to silence free discussion in Parliament. Nor was this an idle fear on the part of the Liberal Opposition. For in 1773 we find Lord North remonstrating against the large number of military preferments which the King himself bestowed; a practice which, he said, loosened Parliamentary discipline, as the officers ceased to look up to the Government, nor could the head of it gain the attachment of the country gentlemen "when they found he had not the credit to provide for their sons and relations." "What," he added, "was not to be apprehended from the King's assiduity in attaching the army personally to himself?" (Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 172.)

The outbreak of the American War naturally intensified this fear, which greatly affected the politics of those years.

"I had as little doubt," wrote Horace Walpole, "but if the conquest of America should be achieved, the moment of the victorious army's return would be that of the destruction of our liberties. Would that army, had it returned victorious, have hesitated to make the King as absolute as they had made him in America? . . . An invasion from France would not be so fatal as the return of such an army." (*ib.* ii. 147.) "I had long dreaded," he says again, "lest success and despair should infuse resolution enough into the King to endeavour to establish absolute power by the army." (*ib.* ii. 432.) "Had the American War been prosperous, I have no doubt but the power of the Crown would have swelled to most dangerous heights." (*ib.* ii. 521.) The Duke of Grafton testifies to the fears entertained by Fox and himself that military success in America would result in a military

occupation of the country, and the consequent destruction of the Constitution and liberty in Great Britain. (*Autobiography*, 277.)

"Who would have imagined," wrote Lord Camden to the Duke on January 4, 1776, "that Ministers could have become popular by forcing this country into a destructive war, and advancing the power of the Crown to a state of despotism; and yet, that is the fact." (*ib.* 279.)

The Duke of Richmond on one occasion spoke of the "nation as so sold to the Crown that nothing but the King's goodness prevented our being absolute slaves." (Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 585.) Lord Dartmouth declared that "the Tories would not be content but with absolute power for the Crown." (*ib.* ii. 22.)

This aspect of the American War accounts for such facts in the attitude of the Opposition as the Duke of Portland's gloating over the loss of a warship to America (*Sir G. Elliot's Life*, i. 74); or Fox's letter to Rockingham on October 13, 1776, in which he referred to the King's troops having landed at Long Island and beaten the colonists near Brooklyn as "terrible news"; or the Duke of Richmond's sailing in a yacht, though Lord-Lieutenant of Sussex, through the fleet in the presence of the King, with the American colours at the masthead. (*Greville Memoirs*, iii. 133.)

Many facts of the time sent to justify this fear of the King becoming a despot. The clergy, according to Walpole, "panted for arbitrary power" being vested in the Crown. (*Last Journals*, ii. 228.) The Court had on its side, he says, the three great bodies of the clergy, the army, and the law. The Fast Sermons in December 1776 "let loose all the zeal of the clergy," the pulpits resounding with doctrines subversive of all the principles of the Revolution of 1688, and the magnificent Markham, Archbishop of York, particularly distinguishing himself by a sermon preached before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on February 21, 1777. For the sentiments of this sermon he was denounced in the Lords by Lord Shelburne, the Duke of Grafton, and Lord Chatham. Writers who revived the obsolete doctrines of passive obedience or non-resistance were encouraged or employed by Lord Mansfield. (*ib.* ii. 594.) The talk of

courtiers was naturally in favour of arbitrary power, whilst it was advocated in public discussion by men in the position of Lord Huntingdon, and of Barnard, Dean of Derry ; the latter receiving an Irish bishopric for so doing in 1780. In this welter of sycophancy, clerical and other, it is pleasant to read of Keppel, Bishop of Exeter and Dean of Windsor, thanking God on his deathbed (1777) that he had never given a vote for the shedding of American blood. (*Last Journals*, ii. 86.)

The King's aim, according to Walpole, was " to extend his prerogative on all occasions, great and small " (*ib.* ii. 113), and it went so far that after General Harvey's death he " directed everything in the army himself, and allowed General Amherst no power." (*ib.* ii. 168.)

Thus there was abundant justification for Dunning's famous motion, which was carried even in that Tory Parliament by a majority of eighteen ; that the influence of the Crown had increased, was increasing, and ought to be diminished. (April 1780.) Unfortunately, his proposal of a few weeks later of an address to the King not to prorogue Parliament till measures had been taken to diminish this influence was defeated by a majority of fifty-one. In 1783, the year of his death, Dunning became Lord Ashburton, but the strange thing about him is, that despite his resolutions against the Crown and his opposition to the American War, " the Greatest Personage in the kingdom said he never knew friendship till he knew Dunning." (Fitzmaurice's *Shelburne*, ii. 320.)

And in the political demi-world there was a similar stir against the monarchy. In June 1774, when the excitement against the Quebec Bill was at its height, the mob became most abusive. As the King went to the House, some held up their fists at him and cried out : " Remember Charles I. Remember James II." (Walpole's *Last Journals*, ii. 359.)

At the close of the American War, in which, as Shelburne once said, the King lost the nation as many provinces as he had children, the Duke of Grafton spoke of " the influence of the Crown having increased beyond all manner of constitutional reckoning," and of the Constitution as " shaken on

every side to its very foundation." (*Autobiography*, 311, 355.)

The French War, which began in 1793 and lasted, with an interlude of fourteen months, for twenty-two years, still further strengthened this tendency, which so many wars have shown, to make the Executive more powerful; so that the Duke of Grafton, writing his autobiography in 1804, when the state of the country seemed to him more gloomy and alarming than he had ever known it, declared that the influence of the Crown, all-powerful as it was in 1762, had not then mounted to the height it had reached at the later date. (23.)

As one extreme provokes its opposite, this tendency naturally produced a democratic reaction, so that the Tory party came to speak of their Liberal opponents as the "republican party" or "faction." (*Lord Colchester's Diary*, i. 22, 23.)

A letter from Fox to his nephew in 1796 shows how strong this feeling was. "It is a duty to brave all calumny that will be thrown on us, on account of the countenance which we shall be represented as giving to the Corresponding Society and others who are supposed to wish the overthrow of the monarchy. My own view of things is, I own, very gloomy, and I am convinced that in a very few years this Government will become completely absolute, or that confusion will come, of a nature almost as much to be deprecated as despotism itself." Again—"I think that we ought to go further towards agreement with the democrats than at any former period. We, as a party, can do nothing, and the contest must be between the Court and the democrats."

Republicanism in England existed long before the French Revolution, but this event spread the infection widely over the country. Even the ranks of the aristocracy felt its influence: as in the case of the third Lord Stanhope, who was more advanced than even his father, also a "determined republican." At the French Revolution, he "laid aside all external ornaments of the peerage." (Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 400.) Lord Holland described him as "the truest Jacobin he ever knew," denouncing everything, "not merely the monarchy, but the clergy and nobility, and hereditary

property in land." (*Whig Memoirs*, ii. 35.) Lord Stanhope is more justly remembered for his inventions; among others, of the first steam carriage in 1790.

Thomas Hollis, who died at the end of 1773, was famous as the most bigoted of all republicans in that he was even "unwilling to converse with men of other principles." (Walpole's *Last Journals*, i. 274.)

The Association for Parliamentary reform, called the Friends of the People, resulted from an after-dinner conversation at Lord Porchester's. His lordship, though active in promoting the association, refused to sign it as not republican enough for his tastes. Then after arraigning the same association as seditious a few months later, he was made the first Earl of Carnarvon (July 1793) (*ib.* i. 13); but, as the war went on, and Government—in the hands of Lord Liverpool or Lord Sidmouth—became more and more repressive of popular liberties, the very word republic came, in the fashionable world, to be regarded as "an indecent word, unfit to be mentioned in company." (Holland, *Further Whig Memoirs*, 186.)

The King, "long the most popular man in his dominion, derived fresh favour with the public from his age and infirmities." (Holland, *Whig Memoirs*, ii. 226.) At the election of 1807 cries of the "Good old King" mingled with the cry of "No Popery" as a reason for voting for the Tories. (*ib.* 216.)

The general exaggeration of loyalty was reflected in Parliament itself. When the King dismissed the Ministry of Lord Grenville on their refusal to pledge themselves not to raise the Catholic question, and the Duke of Portland came in at the head of a Tory ministry (April 25, 1807), a resolution was proposed to make any such pledge on the part of Ministers contrary to their first duties. "Canning, after the most fulsome adulation to the King, said that he had made up his mind—when the Catholic Bill was first mentioned—to vote for it, if the King was for it, and against it, if the King was against it." (Romilly's *Memoirs*, ii. 200.) Can anything more abject be conceived? and in the debate on the subject, both in the Lords and Commons, of April 13, Romilly says that "the grossest adulation to the King"

was shown, and the most servile doctrines maintained. (*ib.* 203.) The country was not far from a despotism over men's minds such as marked the days of the early Roman Empire, yet a great dread prevailed of a coming Republic; so difficult is it for contemporaries to judge rightly of the real political tendencies of their time.

CHAPTER VII

George III. and Lord North

I

George III. must have led a dog's life, between Ministers whom he disliked only less than they disliked one another, and a budding family, of whom the eldest, the future king, set no shining example to the other twelve.

Walpole describes how it made him smile to think that "in the palace of piety and pride His Royal Highness (the growing George IV.) had learnt nothing but the dialect of footmen and grooms" (*Last Journals*, ii. 405); but it can hardly have made the King smile. In May 1781 the Prince "drunk more publicly in the Drawing-room, and talked there irreligiously and indecently in the openest manner. . . . He passed the nights in the lowest debaucheries, whilst both he and his brother of Cumberland would talk of the King 'in the grossest manner, even in his hearing.'" (*ib.* ii. 360.)

All this must have been deeply galling to a father who, like George III., could justly boast and thank Heaven that his own "morals and course of life had but little resembled those too prevalent in the present age" (December 10, 1880, North, *Letters*, ii. 343); and who, when he had to ask Lord North to pay £5000 to Mrs. Robertson, the actress, for the non-publication of the letters of his son of seventeen, could honestly say: "I am happy to be able to say that I never was personally engaged in such a transaction, which perhaps makes me feel this the stronger." (August 28, 1781, *ib.* ii. 382.)

And to the domestic trouble was added the political trouble, the everlasting conflict with the Constitution. Even if he undermined the Constitution, he loved it. His regret was that North had not some degree of his own enthusiasm

for "the beauty, excellence, and perfection of the British Constitution as by law established." (November 14, 1778, *ib.* ii. 215.) North should see that there "at least was one person willing to preserve unspoiled the most beautiful combination that ever was framed." (April 11, 1780, *ib.* ii. 314.) And with what pluck he took arms against a sea of troubles! When he and his Minister had almost driven the ship of State upon the rocks, he could still inspire his despondent servant with courage: "I am not surprised Lord North feels disgusted at the fatigue he undergoes; he may be certain I feel my task as unpleasant as he can possibly feel his, but both of us are in trammels, and it is our duty to continue." (March 27, 1781, *ib.* ii. 365.)

So they went on through the American War, like galley slaves chained to their oars, the Minister year after year entreating to be released, and the King as pertinaciously refusing to release him.

Yet it had been a happy day for George III. when on the resignation, or, as the King always called it, the desertion of the Duke of Grafton in 1770, Lord North had come to his assistance and taken over the government of the country. The King had shaken off the Whigs, and could henceforth indulge his masterful spirit with the help of a character weaker than his own. The supposed constitutional king controlled the minutest detail of government, military, civil, and ecclesiastical, with an assertion of personal sovereignty that no absolute monarch could have surpassed. How keenly he watched men's conduct in Parliament, and with what a rod he ruled his Tory supporters! Just as on November 10, 1766, he had to remind the Duke of Grafton of the practice of his predecessors always to send him a list of the peers present in the House the preceding day (Grafton's *Autobiography*, 130), so he instructed Lord North to see that his supporters attended at debates more regularly, and spoke more often. "I have a right to expect," he writes (February 26, 1773), "a hearty support from every one in my service, and shall remember defaulters," in reference to their action on the Royal Marriage Bill; he would like to have a list of his supporters who "went away and of those that deserted to the minority; that would be a rule for my conduct in

the Drawing-room to-morrow." (March 14, 1772, North, *Letters*, i. 91, 97.) On February 16, 1773, he expresses himself as much pleased at the very handsome majority of the night before: "I am anxious to know how people voted on this occasion, therefore wish to see you this evening at nine, that I may have an explanation of what passed; but should there be defaulters, it will be highly necessary to punish them." (*ib.* i. 123.) Not much more liberty of thought under such a system than at Rome under Tiberius!

As for those who openly differed from him, the avowed Liberal Opposition, they were merely "a desperate faction." (February 24, 1777.) Any one who did not share his own views against granting independence to America did not deserve to be a member of the community. (June 13, 1781, *ib.* ii. 377.) Any one who supported General Conway's motion for an inquiry into the conduct of the war must have "lost the feelings of Englishmen"; though the majority which had not lost such feelings only amounted to twenty-two. (February 26, 1782, *ib.* ii. 409.)

But, at least, the personal relations between the King and his chief servant were satisfactory; for the two were more alike in many points of character than they were even in face. "You are my sheet anchor," writes the King, "and your ease and comfort I shall in the whole transaction try to secure." (November 7, 1775, *ib.* i. 286.) Again: "The affectionate regard I have for you arises from the very handsome conduct you have held when others shamefully deserted my service." (*ib.* i. 287.) "I ever wish for your ease and every other comfort that can befall you, and no one can more sincerely interest himself than I do in whatever affects you." (May 9, 1777, *ib.* ii. 68.) "You will never find any occasion of providing for your children that I should not be more happy if possible than yourself to provide for them. It has not been my fate in general to be well served; by you I have, and therefore cannot forget it." (March 31, 1776, *ib.* ii. 17.)

With the encouragement and remonstrance of a personal friend the King helped his luckless Minister to fight against the giants of indecision and despondency. And truly there

was need of it in those times, when Lord Chatham could write to Calcraft on November 28, 1770 he thought all was ruined, and that he was determined to be found at his post when destruction befell them ; that the times were " pollution in their very quintessence." (*Chatham Correspondence*, iv. 32.) Or again when he could write to Calcraft : " If you leave England for a time you are sure of a better air ; and pretty sure not to meet a more corrupted people or more contemptible country." (August 17, 1772, *ib.* iv. 224.) But the King said truly of himself that he " never inclined to dejection " (December 10, 1770), and later, when things were looking their darkest, he could still write to his unhappy servant : " That Lord North should feel a little languid on the approach of the meeting of Parliament is not surprising ; it is far from being a pleasant sensation even to me." (October 25, 1780, *ib.* ii. 337.) He remonstrates with him for making plans with others about employments without first consulting his master : " Here you can repose your indigested thoughts more safely in the breast of one who has ever treated you more as his friend than Minister." (June 2, 1778, *ib.* ii. 200.) When North wrote that he was " conscious and certain that he had neither the authority nor the abilities requisite for the conduct of affairs," the King flared up at the expression " authority," for since Lord North had so handsomely devoted himself on the retreat of the Duke of Grafton, George had never had a political thought he had not communicated to his friend, had accepted plans highly displeasing to himself, because he had thought they would assist his Minister, and had yielded to measures he did not quite approve. (November 14, 1778, *ib.* ii. 215.)

And this beautiful state of friendship extended from politics to finance. Both King and Minister fell dreadfully into debt, and helped themselves out of it at the cost of the country they both loved so well. On his accession, the King had surrendered the hereditary revenues of the Crown in exchange for a Civil List of £800,000 a year for his life. In 1769 it was complained that this was not enough ; in 1777 there was a debt of over £600,000, which Parliament was asked to pay, and which it did pay. It also agreed to raise the King's annual allowance by £100,000 a year ; for it was a

docile majority, just there to register the King's wishes, and to repay some of the debt incurred in buying their seats and their votes. "If the Duke of Northumberland," wrote the King on October 11, 1779, "requires some gold pills for the election, it would be wrong not to give him some assistance." (October 16, 1779, *Chatham Correspondence*, ii. 286.) Among the first things the King did with this addition to his banking account was to write a very nice letter to his Chancellor of the Exchequer, insisting on knowing whether £12,000 or £15,000 would help to set North's affairs in order; for "if it will, nay, if £20,000 is necessary, I am resolved you shall have no other concerned in freeing you than myself." Of all the letters he had ever written to North this was the one that had given him the greatest pleasure; he wanted no other return than North's conviction that the King loved him as much as a man of worth as he esteemed him as a Minister. This mark of his affection was the only one he had ever been able to perform. (September 19, 1777, *ib.* ii. 83.) No wonder the King loved the British Constitution which permitted so neat an arrangement. Under this "gold pill" system the King and his Chancellor, and their bought Parliamentary majority, could play comfortably into one another's hands. In a republic it would have been called corruption; but these things were done in a monarchy.

The system continued unabashed. On December 22, 1788, Sir William Young, writing to Lord Buckingham, spoke of the "active spirit of subornation which stalked in open day. Offers have been made so prodigal that not fifty years of patronage could accomplish the performance." (Buckingham's *Court, etc.*, ii. 70.)

CHAPTER VIII

George III. and Lord North

II

"A general disinclination to every restraint" was the fault George III. found with his own age (February 23, 1772), as some now find it of our own. It was to him a "selfish and unprincipled age." (May 25, 1778.) He was sorry that it had been his lot to reign in a "most profligate age." He thought of himself as "steering the bark in difficult times" (June 27, 1779), as resolved "till drove to the wall to do what he could to save the empire." (February 26, 1782.)

To do this he became frankly and violently partisan, utterly despising, as became a man of his spirit, the absurd political fiction that a constitutional monarch remains a neutral in the party welfare of his time. Feeling as bitterly as he did against Catholics, Dissenters, American colonists, and Parliamentary opponents, how was it possible for him to be a neutral in the strife? Openness, he once told Lord North, he looked upon as at all times the proper line for an honest fellow to take (January 16, 1775), and he certainly never failed to take it. There was no paltry concealment of his dislikes and hatreds.

But it is naturally more openly revealed in his private letters to his Minister. If the City of London dares to bring him a political remonstrance and petition for a change of Ministers, it is "the most violent, insolent, and licentious ever presented . . . a flagrant piece of impertinence." (March 13, 1773, North, *Correspondence*, i. 125); if Lord Chatham brings forward a motion to end hostilities with America, his speech consists of nothing but "specious words and malevolence" (May 31, 1777, *ib.* ii. 70); if Fox persuades North to vote with him on the question of the committal of

Woodfall, the printer, for breach of privilege, the King is "highly incensed at his presumption . . . indeed that young man had so thoroughly cast off every principle of common honour and honesty that he must become as contemptible as he is odious." (February 16, 1774, North, *Correspondence*, i. 170.)

But it was less individual Liberals than all Liberal principles that were odious to George III. Conciliation was foreign to his nature, which was all for a vigorous and spirited policy, for coercion rather than for concession. Consequently we lost the American colonies. Lord Rockingham's ministry had repealed the Stamp Act, which had started the trouble, but, though the King at last consented to repeal, he wrote of it later as "the fatal compliance of 1766." (February 4, 1774, *ib.* i. 164.) To an excess of leniency, not to his own obstinacy, he ascribed all the subsequent disasters. When in 1774 matters became acute, and the proposals of Congress gave an opening for a settlement, and North was willing to negotiate, it was the King who prevailed on the Cabinet to reject all temperate counsels, and to proclaim as traitors all who refused to submit. He was certain, he wrote on July 5, 1775, that "any other conduct but compelling obedience would be ruinous and culpable." (*ib.* i. 253.) Where so great interests are at stake, the system of constitutional monarchy risks too much on the chance of the disposition of an individual.

No British monarch, though he began his reign by an attempt at peace with France, was more often involved in war than George III. Yet it was from no sheer love for it, like that which Louis XIV. regretted on his deathbed. In November 1770, when there was a good chance of war with Spain, he writes to Lord North: "Every feeling of humanity, as well as the knowledge of the distress war must occasion, makes me desirous of preventing it, if it can be accomplished, provided the honour of this country can be preserved." (*ib.* i. 41.) In 1772, over the chronic dispute with France about the fortifications of Dunkirk, he refused to make such a trifle a point of honour, and declared his reluctance to draw the country into an additional fifty millions of National Debt. (*ib.* i. 106.) On October 30,

1804, in speaking to Rose about the French War renewed the same year, he said that something ought to be done to bring it to an end, since the sort of warfare then waging would wear out the resources of the country without leading to any conclusion of it. (*Rose*, ii. 176.)

And, on the matter of the American War, it is only fair to read the able Apologia for his share in it written by the King at 10.34 a.m., of June 14, 1779: "I should think it the greatest instance among the many I have met with of ingratitude and injustice, if it could be supposed that any man in my dominions more ardently desired the restoration of peace and solid happiness in every part of this empire than I do: there is no personal sacrifice I could not readily yield for so desirable an object; but, at the same time, no inclination to get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can incline me into what I look upon as the destruction of the empire. I have heard Lord North frequently drop that the advantages to be gained by this contest could never repay the expense: I own that, let any war be ever so successful, if persons will sit down and weigh the expenses, they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the State, enriched individuals, and perhaps raised the name only of the conquerors; but this is only weighing such events in the scale of a tradesman behind his counter; it is necessary for those in the station it has pleased Divine Providence to place me to weigh whether expenses, though very great, are not sometimes necessary to prevent what might be more ruinous to a country than loss of money. The present contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any country was ever engaged. . . . Independence is their object; that certainly is one which every man not willing to sacrifice every object to a *momentary* and inglorious peace must concur with me in thinking that this country can never submit to; should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow them. . . . Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be a separate State, then this Island would be reduced to itself, and soon would be a poor Island indeed, for, reduced in her trade, merchants would retire with their wealth to climates more to their advantage, and shoals of manufacturers

would leave this country for the new empire." (North, *Correspondence*, ii. 253.)

Yet the West Indies and Ireland are still with us, nor have our manufacturers left us in shoals. Nor have we sunk in the scale of Powers, as the King predicted. "We are contending for our whole consequence," he wrote, "whether we are to rank among the great Powers of Europe, or be reduced to one of the least considerable." (June 13, 1781, *ib.* ii. 377.) Never would he agree to America's independence, which he was "confident would annihilate the rank in which Great Britain stood among the European States, and would render his situation in this country below continuing an object to him." (January 21, 1782, *ib.* ii. 403.)

But he had to come to it at last. From 1778 onwards Lord North tried to shake himself loose from his bondage to an infatuated King. And there is something pathetic in the King's struggles to escape from any contact with Lord Chatham or the Liberal Opposition, though it might have saved the situation had he done so. "I solemnly declare nothing shall bring me to treat personally with Lord Chatham." (March 16, 1778, *ib.* ii. 149.) "It is not private pique, but an opinion founded on an experience of now seventeen years that makes me resolve to run any risk rather than submit to Opposition." (March 16, 1778, *ib.* ii. 151.) He will not hear of North's deserting him, and leaving the road open to "a set of men who certainly would make him a slave for the remainder of his days." "No consideration in life shall make me stoop to Opposition. I am still ready to accept any part of them that will come to the assistance of my present efficient Ministers; but whilst any ten men in the kingdom will stand by me, I will not give myself up into bondage. My dear Lord, I will rather risk my crown than do anything I think personally disgraceful." (March 17, 1778, *ib.* ii. 153.) "Rather than be shackled by those desperate men, I will rather see any form of government introduced into this Island, and lose my crown than wear it as a disgrace." (March 18, 1778, *ib.* ii. 156.) The throne was indeed no bed of roses, and it is sad to think that in July 1783 he is reported to have told Lord Hertford

that no morning passed but he wished himself eighty or ninety, or even dead. (Walpole's *Last Journals*, ii. 529.)

Yet all this time general dismay possessed the country; with France coming into the war, it was felt that Ministers were unequal to the situation, felt even among Ministers themselves. North wished for a change of Ministers, but the utmost the King would hear of was a slight infusion of Liberals in the Cabinet: "Strengthen this administration by an accession from any quarter, but I will never consent to removing the members of the present Cabinet from my service." (March 22, 1778, North, *Correspondence*, ii. 159.) The death of Chatham in that May saved the King from the country's most likely saviour, and the King's resentment at the public honours voted by Parliament to the deceased statesman is one of the least pleasing incidents in the whole of his reign.

Still North sought for freedom, nor was the King unwilling to try a modified Coalition Government. But how was it possible when he declared: "Before I will ever hear of any man's readiness to come into office, I will expect him to see it signed under his own hand that he is resolved to keep the empire entire, and that no troops shall be consequently withdrawn from thence, nor independence ever allowed." (June 22, 1779, *ib.* ii. 262.) "To obtain the support of Opposition," he writes to Chancellor Thurlow, "I must deliver up my person, my principles, and my dominions into their hands: I must also abandon my old meritorious and faithful servants to be treated as their resentment or their mercy may incline them." (December 1779, *ib.* ii. 298.) Even the country gentlemen and the capitalist classes turned against the Government, but, whilst North pressed for an entire change of government, the King declared that "the giving up the game would be total ruin." (September 26, 1780, *ib.* ii. 336.) The capitulation of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown in October 1781 drove him to contemplate flight to Hanover, and the Royal yacht was prepared for a voyage, but the country was destined to have nearly thirty years more of his misrule. At last came North's resignation on March 20, 1782, the King to the end persisting in refusing to send for any Opposition leader,

or to treat personally with one of them. The theory of the Constitution is that the monarch accepts a ministry desired by Parliament; but George III. defied such a theory altogether. Affecting to be above party, he thought to dispense with the evils of party government, and he ended by flinging himself heart and soul on to the side of one party exclusively. By so doing he lost us thirteen colonies and eight islands; he sacrificed two whole armies; he lost us for a time the sovereignty of the sea, and nearly doubled the National Debt; and for fifty years, from 1761 to 1810, he must have cost the country at least forty-three million pounds. It was a large price to pay for a Patriot King. Whether it was too much must be left to individual judgment.

But he felt deeply the loss of America. At a levée held in the Closet in 1788 he said to Lord Thurlow and the Duke of Leeds: "Whatever you and Mr. Pitt may think or feel, I that am born a gentleman shall never lay my head in my last pillow in peace and quiet so long as I remember the loss of my American colonies." (Malmesbury's *Diaries*, iv. 19.)

CHAPTER IX

In the Coils of the Coalition

The fall of Lord North brought Lord Rockingham again to the surface, but this time only to rule between March and July 1, 1782, when he died. Yet in those few months he had done something to curtail the powers of the Crown. He had reduced the Royal Household; debarred contractors from sitting in Parliament; and disfranchised excise and custom-house officers: this last, according to Walpole, "a very material wound to the influence of the Crown." (*Last Journals*, ii. 430.)

His successor was Lord Shelburne, who, according to Walpole, was "really hated by His Majesty." (*ib.* ii. 444.) He had been so at an earlier date. When he was made Secretary of State in the Grafton Ministry of July 1766, it was "notwithstanding the strongly expressed dislike of the King." The King, adopting the popular nickname, habitually spoke of him as Malagrida, or the Jesuit of Berkeley Square. (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 6.) The reasons for this dislike were due mainly to such facts as Shelburne's open condemnation of the extravagance of the Court; his opposition to the King's application for payment of the arrears of his Civil List; his contention, against the King's Friends, that the King had no absolute right to the Civil List independently of Parliament, and that Parliament had a perfect right to control the expenditure of it. (*ib.* ii. 4.) And because he was opposed to the coercion of America, the Duke of Grafton in 1768 was subjected to daily instigations from the King to expel him from his Cabinet (*ib.* i. 385); though the King, with his customary urbanity, was "anxious that as Lord Shelburne was to be removed, it should be done in the least hostile manner possible." (Grafton's *Auto-*

biography, 221.) He resigned on October 19, 1768, as told in his Life. (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 387.)

But, whatever the King's personal feelings, it was to Shelburne that he turned as a successor to Lord Rockingham. But Fox and eight other of the Rockingham Whigs left the Ministry, contending that the choice of the Prime Minister appertained to the Cabinet, not to the Crown (*Grafton*, 361), and they resented Shelburne's acceptance of office without consultation with them. Shelburne, on the other hand, defended the King's prerogative to appoint his own servants. The intrigues at the time seemed to some to be most discreditable. The Duke of Grafton was "so thoroughly disgusted with all that he saw and heard that he wished not to come near the scene." (*Autobiography*, 376.) The King said he would rather go to Hanover than admit either Fox or the Duke of Portland into the Shelburne Ministry. (Walpole, *Last Journals*, ii. 494.) At that time no one stood worse in the King's books than the Duke of Portland, destined only the next year to become Prime Minister.

Lord Shelburne's Ministry was defeated in the Commons on February 17, 1783. His Government had committed the unpardonable sin of bringing the war with France, Spain, Holland, and our Colonies to an end; and it fell before the united attack of the Fox and North factions. Then began intriguing for the formation of a new Ministry worse than ever. It shows in a sense how easily the world is governed, that six weeks elapsed without any Government at all. The King tried every possible combination, but Fox he could not and would not stand. In an interview with W. Grenville on March 16 he "loaded Fox with every expression of abhorrence," and was "little less violent" against the Duke of Portland. He reflected the moral indignation widely felt in the country at the coalescence of men so antagonistic to one another as Fox and North had been all their lives, and complained, not without justice, that the country was no longer divided between parties formed on definite principles, but between factions whose only object was to force themselves into office at any cost.

The situation was an impossible one for all parties, nor is it easy to apportion to each one his just share of blame;

but the King's point of view is entitled to consideration and even to our sympathy. He thus gave it in a letter to Lord Temple, dated April 1, 1783: . . . "An experience of now above twenty-two years convinces me that it is impossible to erect a stable administration within the narrow bounds of any faction, for none deserve the name of party; and that in an age when disobedience to law and authority is as prevalent as a thirst after changes in the best of all possible Constitutions, it requires temper and sagacity to stem those evils which can alone be expected from a collection of the best and most calm heads and hearts the kingdom possesses. Judge therefore of the uneasiness of my mind at having been thwarted in every attempt to keep the administration of public affairs out of the hands of the most unprincipled coalition the annals of this or any other nation can equal. I have withstood it till not a single man is willing to come to my assistance. . . . To end a conflict which stops every wheel of Government, and which would affect public credit if it continued much longer, I intend this night to acquaint that *grateful* Lord North that the seven Cabinet Counsellors the coalition has named shall kiss hands to-morrow. . . . A Ministry which I have avowedly attempted to avoid, by calling on every other description of men, cannot be supposed to have either my favour or confidence; and as such I shall most certainly refuse any honours they may ask for. I trust the eyes of the nation will soon be opened, as my sorrow may prove fatal to my health if I remain long in this thraldom. I trust you will be steady in your attachment to me, and ready to join other honest men in watching the conduct of this unnatural combination, and I hope many months will not elapse before the Grenvilles, the Pitts, and other men of abilities and character will relieve me from a situation that nothing could have compelled me to submit to but the supposition that no other means remained of preventing the public finances from being materially affected." (Buckingham's *Court and Cabinets*, i. 218.)

When Lord North the preceding month advised the King to send for the Duke of Portland as his possible next Minister, the King flatly refused to see him, though he might send his proposals in writing. The year before he had refused to see

Rockingham in the same circumstances. The Duke naturally resented such treatment, returning for answer that if the King employed him, he must first of all see him. (Walpole, *Last Journals*, ii. 499.) On April 2 the Duke of Portland found himself at the head of the Coalition Ministry, with Fox and Lord North joint Secretaries of State. What a picture all this presents of the difficulties of a limited monarch. The only parallel to George III. at grips with the political factions of his day is Laocoon writhing in the coils of the snakes. "I have taken the bitter potion," he wrote to Shelburne on April 2, 1782, "of appointing the seven Ministers named by the Duke of Portland and Lord North to kiss hands." (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 262.)

But the Coalition Ministers had a different point of view, and in its turn a just one. They wished for a Government of some strength and stability, and less at the mercy of Royal caprice and favour than the Governments they had known under George III. The King, Fox argued with Lord North, "should not be suffered to be his own Minister." And Lord North agreed as to curbing the Royal power: "The King ought to be treated with every sort of respect and attention, but the appearance of power is all that a King of this country can have." (Fox's *Correspondence*, ii. 378.) In other words, the struggle lay between Ministers wishing to make the King their puppet and the King wishing to have puppets for Ministers. And this has been the struggle of Constitutional Monarchy ever since.

As the object of the Coalition Ministry was to make statesmen less the "servants" of the Crown than the real rulers of the State, the brevity of its tenure of service is fair matter for regret. Posterity with its power of clearer vision need not share the great moral indignation of contemporaries at the Coalition between statesmen so opposed as Fox and Lord North had been in previous years. Fox's language to Lord North during the American War had indeed gone to the furthest extremes of violence; as when on November 27, 1781, he had expressed the wish that North and his Ministers might some day expiate their misdeeds on a public scaffold (*Parl. Hist.* xxii. 692); but the cause of discord had passed, and both statesmen kept in view the

reasonable distinction between political antagonism and personal animosity. In the heat of controversy many of the blows that are aimed at a measure or a policy are apt to fall upon their advocates, but with whatever vigour politicians may belabour one another they know that in the whirl and eddy of politics enmities may change to friendships and friendships to enmities without any real detriment to private amity. So it was with Fox and Lord North, and so it had been in 1757 between Pitt and the Duke of Newcastle, whose Coalition Government formed one of the most successful ministries of modern times. And so it was again when in 1794 the younger Pitt formed a new Coalition by adding to his Cabinet such lifelong Whigs and opponents as the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, and Mr. Wyndham.

Conway, writing to the Duke of Grafton on January 4, 1784, paints a woeful picture of the political condition of things. He speaks of "the miserable condition of our public affairs owing to the ambition and impracticability of individuals who are somehow grown to be necessary parts of the system. . . . Being of such incongruous and incompatible natures they can unite in no plan, and that no doubt is an evil without a remedy. We do not so much want them as we want that they should not disturb one another, and suffer some administration to be permanent." (*Grafton*, 388.) "Our poor, almost sinking country" seemed to the writer past praying for, and this note of pessimism runs through all the writings of the time regarding a system or form of government which many besides the King believed to be a model of perfection.

Lord Temple, who was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland under Lord Shelburne's Ministry of 1782, gives a vivid account of an audience he had with the King on his return from Ireland after the fall of the Shelburne Ministry. The King made "strong expressions of resentment and disgust of his Ministers, and of personal abhorrence of Lord North, whom he charged with treachery and ingratitude of the blackest nature. He repeated that to such a Ministry he never would give his confidence, and that he would take the first moment for dismissing them."

They went on to discuss the Duke of Portland's proposed

annual allowance of £100,000 to the Prince of Wales. The King " stated with strong disgust the manner in which it was opened to him, as a thing *decided*, and even drawn up in the shape of a message, to which his signature was desired as a matter of course, to be brought before Parliament the next day. His Majesty declared himself to be decided to resist this attempt, and to push the consequences to their full extent, and to try the spirit of the Parliament and people upon it. . . . He declared his intention to resist at all events and hazards the proposition for this enormous allowance to His Royal Highness, of whose conduct he spoke with much dissatisfaction." (Buckingham's *Court and Cabinets of George III.*, i. 393.)

But Laocoon was determined not to remain long in the coils of the Coalition. The King's thraldom was only to last from April to December. During those months he held aloof from his Ministers, scheming with Lord Temple for their overthrow. The chance came with the East India Bills introduced by Fox on November 18, 1783. Their object was to take from the East Indian Company, and to vest in commissioners nominated by Parliament, and independent of the Crown, the management of Indian affairs. Pitt attacked this encroachment on the Royal prerogative in the usual unmeasured terms, and a tremendous agitation was started in the country. Nevertheless, the Bills passed the Commons with thumping majorities. It was when they reached the Lords that trouble began. Lord Temple not only denounced the measures as " infamous," but between the first and second reading prevailed on the King to authorise him to use the King's name as a factor in the dispute. So a card was sent round to the effect that " whoever voted for the India Bill was not only not the King's friend, but would be considered by him as an enemy ; and if these words were not strong enough, Earl Temple might use whatever words he might deem stronger and more to the purpose." (*ib.* i. 285.)

Never was greater contempt shown for Parliamentary liberties than in this action on the part of the King ; for it cut at the root of all liberty. It practically made the King a despot, if the threat of his enmity could be used to bully the

legislature into compliance with his wishes, and his enmity was a most serious menace, when so few offices of honour or profit could be held or hoped for by the unfortunate victim of the King's enmity. No wonder the Commons passed a resolution by an immense and angry majority that the reporting of any real or pretended opinion of the King on any measure before Parliament was a high crime and misdemeanour. But it availed nothing; for the votes had been influenced, and the rejection of the Indian Bills by the Lords saved the King from the more dangerous alternative of destroying them, as was clearly contemplated, by the exercise of his veto.

The King's triumph was complete. On December 18, 1783, the day after the rejection in the Lords, a message was sent at midnight to Lord North and to Fox commanding them to deliver up their seals of office, and "in order to mark emphatically the royal displeasure, they were desired to send in their seals by the Under-Secretaries, as a personal interview with them would be disagreeable to His Majesty. The next day the rest of the Ministry were dismissed, and the letters conveying their dismissal were signed by Lord Temple." (*ib.* i. 290.)

For three days Lord Temple held the seals, and then Pitt became George's first Minister, and at the close of the next year, 1784, Lord Temple became Marquis of Buckingham.

So began the long Ministry of Pitt, then a young man of less than twenty-five, and for seventeen years the King had peace so far as changes of his chief Minister were concerned, but the revolution which triumphed over the Coalition was disastrous for the country; for had Fox continued in power the whole course of events would have been different. The agitation against the slave trade, which began in 1788, would not have had to continue for nineteen years before achieving its end. The satisfaction of the Catholic claims of Ireland by enabling Catholics to vote for and sit in the Irish Parliament would have prevented the Irish Rebellion of 1798, and possibly as a consequence the disastrous Act of Union. And above all, there would probably have been no war with France, beginning in 1793 and lasting with scarcely an interruption till 1815. There would have been no subsidies of

millions of pounds to fan the reluctant monarchies of the Continent into taking an active share with England in her war with France.

There would have been no enormous addition to the National Debt. Never has Constitutional Monarchy cost this country more dear than when it forcibly ejected Fox from power and put Pitt in his place.

Lord Macaulay indeed has said that the country was never more peaceably or successfully governed than between the ten years from 1784 till 1793, when hostilities with France began. But this view would seem to leave out of account the great Regency question of 1788–89. The Constitution had no provision against the possibility of the mental affliction of its Sovereign, and it was just this contingency which occurred. From November 1788 till the following February, when the King recovered, a fierce struggle ensued between parties as to the person or the rights of the Regent. Had the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV., the inherent right as heir-apparent to assume the functions of Royalty, or did it rest with Parliament as representing the nation to nominate the Regent and to fix the conditions ? The latter was Pitt's view, whilst the former was that of Fox, with whom, at the time, the Prince was on the most cordial terms of friendship. As it was more likely at the time that the King would die than that he would recover, it was clear that whether under a regency, or a change of monarch, the Opposition would come into power. Wherefore, many political rats, chief among them Lord Chancellor Thurlow, left or thought of leaving the sinking ship and swimming to the incoming one. Pitt's reign was in obvious peril. When he sent the Government's plan for a regency to the Prince, the answer was addressed not to him, but to the Cabinet. The Prince was so fully minded to dismiss Pitt's ministry that he had actually drawn up a list of its successors. (*Court and Cabinets*, i. 96.) Only the King's recovery saved the Government.

CHAPTER X

George III. and Pitt

December 19, 1783, was a red-letter day in the life of George III.; for it was the day on which Pitt became Prime Minister, on the dismissal of the Coalition Ministry. Calm water seemed to have been reached at last, and some prospect in view of a stable Government.

Yet at that time, even in the miraculous politician of twenty-five, the King must have had much to forgive or forget, for on June 12, 1781, on Fox's motion for a peace with the Colonies, in reply to Lord Westcote, who had called the American War a "holy" one, Pitt had pronounced it "a most accursed, wicked, barbarous, cruel, unnatural, unjust, and diabolical war." (*Parl. Hist.* xxii. 488.) His opinions, too, on Parliamentary Reform were notorious, and in the first motion he had brought forward in favour of it, on May 7, 1782 (just fifty years before any reform was carried), he had not spared the Crown itself, loudly inveighing against "the corrupt influence of the Crown—an influence which has been pointed out in every period as the fertile source of all our miseries . . . an influence which has grown up with our growth and strengthened with our strength, but which, unhappily, has not diminished with our diminution, nor decayed with our decay."

Nevertheless, when Lord Shelburne resigned on February 24, 1783, the King had jumped at Shelburne's suggestion that Pitt should be his successor. He had pressed him in the strongest manner, insisting on his taking time before declining. He had been "much hurt" by his prompt and resolute refusal on March 25, and had declared that after the way in which he had been treated by the Duke of Portland and Lord North, it was "impossible he could ever admit either of them into his service." But the Duke of Portland it had to be, with Lord North and the still more hated Fox

as Secretaries of State under him. Their East Indian Bill, with the popular agitation against its alleged anti-monarchical intention, had been fatal to their Government, for the King—despite the measure's easy passage through the Commons—had used his influence to wreck it in the Lords, and had followed up that action by the same peremptory dismissal of his Ministers as that which William IV. employed against the Melbourne Ministry in 1834. Fox used to say that Sayer's caricatures had done more to injure his Indian Bill than all the debates in Parliament, but it was the King's action which was decisive, and then, in the consequent confusion, when he found himself "on the edge of a precipice," and "every ray of hope was pleasing," he had turned to the youthful son of Lord Chatham and made him Prime Minister. Against the "desperate faction"—as he styled the new Opposition—he had now found a Minister in whose hands he might fairly hope that "the most perfect of all human formations, the British Constitution," might be safe. (Stanhope's *Pitt*, i. Appendix VI.)

The King showed his discernment, not only in the choice of a man destined to prove one of the greatest of English statesmen, but in his feeling of the political pulse of the People as then expressed through an unreformed Parliament; for after Pitt's first Indian Bill had also been rejected in the Commons, the General Election, consequent on the Dissolution of March 24, sent the Whig Party flying, and returned Pitt to power with a majority destined to remain true to him through three successive septennial elections.

It is chiefly in reference to the great war with France, and to the burning question of Catholic emancipation, that the relations between Pitt and George III. are of most instructive interest.

I. George III., though destined to be involved in one of the longest wars ever waged by his country, was by nature a most pronounced pacifist. This is well shown by a letter of his to Pitt of October 20, 1788, when the Minister was anxious to take a line of policy, ultimately successful, to save Sweden from a threatened attack by Denmark and Russia. Alluding to the peace with America, he declared that, since the country had taken that "disgraceful step," he had wished

—what years he had still to reign—that he might not again be drawn into a war. "I am now within a few days of twenty-eight years, having been not on a bed of roses. I began with a successful war; the people grew tired of that and called out for peace. Since that, the most justifiable war any country ever waged, there in a few campaigns, from being popular again peace was called for." He must be a second Don Quixote, he wrote, if he could ever wish to fall into such a situation again. So, though anxious to save Sweden from becoming a province of Russia, he wanted no general war. On October 28 he authorised the Cabinet to use what language it thought best, though he could never think that the government of Sweden, by a corrupt King or a corrupt Senate, could be worth the risk of a war. (*ib.* ii. Appendix IV.)

When the French Revolution began in 1789, nothing was further from Pitt's wish or expectation than to be in any way mixed up with it; nor did war with the Republic come within the horizon of probabilities till towards the latter months of 1792. Only in the February of that year had Pitt declared that, never in the history of the country, had there been a period when fifteen years of assured peace seemed more likely, and on the strength of that belief he had reduced both the Army and Navy. When Talleyrand had come to London early in the same year, and proposed an Anglo-French Alliance, the Council was divided about it: Pitt, Grenville, and Dundas inclining to the idea, whilst Thurlow, Camden, and, above all, the King, strongly opposed it. (*Lecky*, vii. 10.) The impression Chauvelin, who followed Talleyrand, formed was, that the King was only restrained by his Ministers from joining the Continental Coalition against France, but that Pitt, whom the King did not like, was inflexibly opposed to such a policy. (*ib.* vii. 17.) By October, after the terrible September massacres, he was informed that Pitt alone in the Council was opposed to arming; that there were rumours of his resignation, and that the King was very cold to him. (*ib.* vii. 65.) In December, Chauvelin wrote: "The King of England and all his Council, with the exception of Pitt, do not cease to desire the war." (*ib.* vii. 123.) Whatever hope there had been of averting war was destroyed by the

execution of Louis XVI. on January 21, 1793. Chauvelin was ordered out of London within eight days, but the very day after the execution, Maret was sent with a dispatch for Chauvelin to leave with Lord Grenville, of a very conciliatory character, deprecating a war as a crime against humanity and expressive of a strong wish for peace. Unhappily, it was never delivered, Chauvelin having left before Maret's arrival on January 30. As the King's influence had been used to secure Chauvelin's dismissal, so Maret learnt it was now used, through Lord Hawkesbury, to induce the Ministers to refuse to see him, though Pitt and Grenville, and a strong party on the Government side, were anxious—while preparing for war—to listen to any reasonable proposal from France. (*Lecky*, vii. 161.)

If this story be true, the King was, to some extent, personally responsible for the war which, on February 1, the Convention declared against us. Had Fox's motion, in December 1792, for recognising the Republic been carried, war might have been averted, but the execution of the French King made the war-spirit no longer repressible, and posterity can only record its admiration for the long stand which Pitt and Grenville had made on behalf of neutrality. The King seems to have overruled his Ministers. To Pitt he wrote, on February 2—the day after war had been declared: "My natural sentiments are so strong for peace that no event of less moment could have made me decidedly of opinion that duty, as well as interest, calls on us to join against the most savage as well as unprincipled nation." And so the war began, which Pitt told Burke that he thought would be a "very short war," terminable in one or two campaigns, but which Burke predicted, with greater foresight, would be both long and dangerous.

It was of this war of which the Duke of Grafton, writing in 1804, said that he should always deprecate it as having been unnecessary; he could not speak of it with patience, as he should ever be convinced that the distresses of Europe had derived their source from the mistaken counsels of the Ministers who governed England at the time. (*Autobiography*, 382.)

Thenceforth, George III. became the great mainstay of

the War Party, but this party never entirely silenced, nor wiped out, the Peace Party, which, throughout the war, under the guidance of Fox and some fifty followers in Parliament, strove gallantly to cool the war fever of the nation. In that same month of February, Fox moved his five Resolutions against the war policy of the Government: their rejection by 270 to 44 gave the King "infinite pleasure," as he wrote to Pitt on February 19. Another motion of the Liberal leader's for negotiation with France, in June, defeated by 187 to 47, was described by the King as one which could only be subscribed to by "an advocate for the wicked conduct of the leaders in that unhappy country"—a most unwarrantable accusation. To Lord Malmesbury, in May 1794, he expatiated on that great bugbear of all short-sighted minds—the danger of "a premature peace." (*Diaries*, iii. 96.)

The country was never so committed to that theory of a united front to the enemy which has since become so popular, but that men like Grey, Sheridan, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Stanhope, and the Duke of Bedford did not hesitate, from time to time, to urge attempts at a pacification.

The war, by the nature of things, proved fatal to Liberalism and Liberal measures. Pitt dropped all interest in Parliamentary Reform, and it was a happy day for the King when Grey's first effort on its behalf was defeated on May 6, 1793, by 282 to 41. He expressed to Pitt his "infinite satisfaction," and added his devout prayer that the Constitution might remain "unimpaired to the latest posterity as a proof of the wisdom of the nation, and its knowledge of the superior blessings it enjoys." (Stanhope's *Pitt*, ii. Appendix XVIII.)

But it was just the Constitution which was imperfect and demanded reform. The repression of public opinion led to Societies like the Corresponding Society, and the Society for Constitutional Information, with a definite desire to set up a Convention in London, in the place of Parliament, and with such natural consequences as the suspension of Habeas Corpus and trials for High Treason. Under this Constitution, men were caught in crimping houses like flies in a web, and forced to enlist—a cause of serious tumults in London in 1795. The same year saw bread riots in Bir-

mingham, Coventry, and Nottingham, which necessitated the calling out of the military. The Corresponding Society held a monster meeting in St. George's Fields, where it demanded annual Parliaments, and universal suffrage; ascribed the high prices of food to a cruel and unnecessary war; and demanded the acknowledgment of the French Republic, and a pacification. So unpopular was the war that Pitt himself said, on November 6, 1795, that, were he to resign, his head would be off in six months. (Stanhope's *Pitt*, ii. 328.) No wonder that he longed for peace and kept his eye wide open for a chance of it, but the King was a growing difficulty in this direction. Thus, on May 28, 1795, in a letter to Pitt, he finds the defeat of Wilberforce's motion for a general pacification by 201 to 86 "highly agreeable," "particularly as the temper of the majority appeared to be strongly in favour of perseverance in the war. The recent accounts from France show the propriety of this opinion, but above all, till the bad principles propagated by that unfortunate nation are given up, it cannot be safe for any civilised part of the globe to treat or trust that people." (*ib.* ii. Appendix XXVII.), yet that same year, France had made peace with Tuscany, Prussia, Sweden, and Spain, and Pitt was evidently tending, in thought, towards peace. He expressed his desire for it in Parliament, and so alarmed was the War Party that Burke was moved to write to him on October 28, 1795, that he trusted in the mercy of God that he would never be led to think the French in the least like other people, or that "what was called peace with the robbers of France was reconcilable with the repose and strength of this kingdom"; and on November 13, 1795, the King wrote to Pitt of the impossibility "for any country to treat with that unprincipled nation."

On December 8, 1795, the King sent a message to Parliament expressive of his desire for a Treaty of Peace, on just and suitable terms, "yet in truth, the King was as keen as ever for the prosecution of the war, and his feelings on the subject were among the principal difficulties with which his Ministers had to contend." (*ib.* ii. 366.)

Early in the next year, on January 27, 1796, the King sent Pitt the objections he entertained to any negotiations

for peace. (*ib.* ii. Appendix XXX.) Nevertheless Pitt persevered, and, after the failure of negotiations in March, renewed them in May. There was need to do so, for the treaties of Basle, in the previous year, had broken up the confederacy of Powers against France, and our Quiberon expedition had been a signal disaster, but in his pacific course Pitt "had great difficulties to contend with. The King was greatly adverse." (*ib.* ii. 371.) Yet, despite the King, and Burke's Letters on a Regicide Peace, Pitt reopened negotiations in October, sending Lord Malmesbury to Paris on a third effort within the year, to bring about a peace, though that too was fated to fail, despite an apparent wish for peace on both sides. It was that mission of which Burke said, on some one's remarking on the length of time it had taken for Lord Malmesbury to reach Paris, that it was not surprising, seeing that he had to go there on his knees; but Fox's complaint that the Government had not sincerely desired peace, but only to get credit for pacific intentions, is hardly borne out by Lord Malmesbury's account of it. (*Diaries*, iii. 259–368.)

The next year, 1797, reproduced the same situation: the continual thwarting of Pitt's efforts for peace by the King's obstinate opposition. So early as February 28, the King wrote to him that "any negotiation at this period would be destruction, for it would be entailing every evil we have been avoiding for a momentary ease." On March 4, he expressed confidence in Pitt's rejoicing with him over the failure of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation: which rather confirms Fox's charge of insincerity. (*Stanhope*, iii. Appendix II.) On April 9, Pitt informed the King that, in his opinion and the Cabinet's, the first possible occasion should be seized for fresh overtures of peace, on the basis of leaving France in possession of Belgium, and with Holland as a Dependency. The King's reply next day was that his personal opinion in favour of war at the start had not changed, but that if that remained a single one, he could not but acquiesce in a measure that, from the bottom of his heart, he deplored. (*ib.* iii. 52.) It was not easy to deal with a King who could write, "I think this country has taken every humiliating step for seeking peace, which the

warmest advocates for that object could suggest," or express his fear of " destroying every remaining spark of vigour in this once firm nation."

Nor did Lord Grenville, our Foreign Minister, co-operate with the Prime Minister much more cordially than the King. When Delacroix, the Directory's Foreign Minister, replied to his suggestion of peace overtures with a ready assent, but with a diplomatic informality, Grenville took great offence, and wished to break off further discussion. Pitt, however, insisted on going on, declaring it his duty " as an English Minister and a Christian to use every effort to stop so bloody and wasting a war." Grenville gave way, but insisted on the King's being made aware of his dissent. When Lord Malmesbury again started on June 30, on his second abortive peace mission, Pitt was so anxious for peace that he declared himself ready to " stifle every feeling of pride." The long negotiations would have ended in peace, in Lord Malmesbury's opinion, but for the Revolution of September 4, which caused a change in the French Plenipotentiaries; but it is clear from his letters that Pitt and Grenville were pulling in different directions. It is impossible to read Lord Malmesbury's two letters to Canning of August 29, without perceiving that Grenville, all the time, was pulling hard for war, hoping to bring about a rupture of the negotiations by raising the terms of peace, so that Malmesbury, feeling that he was at Lille with the real object of breaking off the negotiation with credit, rather than of terminating it successfully, contemplated resignation (*Diaries*, iii. 517–9); and behind Grenville and the War Party in the Cabinet was the King, so that it is not surprising that the peace mission failed. Lord Malmesbury thought it would infallibly have succeeded but for the " political earthquake " of September 4 at Paris (iii. 577), but the fault did not all lie with the French, who, to the last, maintained their unshaken wish for peace. The main obstacles against Pitt were " the vehement prejudice of the King, the unbending temper of Lord Grenville, and the warlike ardour of some other of his colleagues." (*Stanhope*, iii. 61.)

So the war had to go on, despite the general wish in

both countries for its termination. "What is its object?" asked Sheridan; "the war is continued for the sole purpose of keeping nine worthless Ministers in their places," and when, on December 14, 1797, there was a great Thanksgiving at St. Paul's, after three great naval victories, Pitt, on the way thither, was hooted at, "and otherwise insulted by the multitude." (*ib.* iii. 79.) On January 24, 1798, at a great dinner in honour of Fox's birthday, the Duke of Norfolk called on the guests to drink to their Sovereign's health—to the majesty of the people. It was for repeating this same toast a few months later at the Whig Club that the King himself struck Fox's name off the Privy Council List, on May 9.

The next chance of peace occurred after November 9, 1799, when Bonaparte, then made First Consul, in a letter to George III., offered to negotiate. The diplomatic impropriety of addressing the King direct was too much for the pedantry of Grenville, and on January 4, 1800, the Cabinet declined the offer. They could not think of such a thing "till the restless scheme of destruction which had endangered the very existence of civil society was at last finally relinquished." (*ib.* iii. 210–1.) Pitt thought it better to wait till the new French Government was more solidly established, letting the French know that the shortest road to peace would be their restoration of Royalty—"that most desirable of all issues to the war," but the King was worst of all. "No disaster," he wrote to Pitt on January 28, 1800, "could make him think the treating for peace wise or safe, whilst the French principles subsisted," for, "no confidence could be placed in the present French Government. My opinion is formed on principle, not on events, and, therefore, is not open to change." So although, as Fox said, the people's desire for peace was none the less strong for the enforced suppression of its utterance, a fair overture for peace had to be neglected, because Pitt wished the French to submit to monarchy again; Grenville wished them to change their principles; and the King was invincibly opposed to peace on any terms.

In August of the same year more overtures for peace fell through, the Cabinet being hopelessly divided. Some were for no peace with a Revolutionary Government; some

saw the only chance of a durable peace in the restoration of the Bourbons; some were for our separate negotiation with France; and others only for a negotiation in company with Germany. Pitt had little chance, but next year, 1801, though he had, in February, been driven by the King's anti-Catholic attitude, to give way to Addington, his hand had the chief control in the negotiations for peace which began in September 1801 and ended on March 27, 1802, in the Treaty of Amiens. It was this peace which Wyndham denounced as the "death warrant" of the country, a blow given to it, under which it might languish for a few years, but from which it could never recover. (*Stanhope*, iii. 360.)

II. On other points besides war or peace, the influence of the Monarch on his Minister deprived the latter of all free play for his abilities, and acted most detrimentally on the future history of the country. As a rule, Pitt, after a struggle, could prevail with the King, who had yielded to him "not only with aversion, but anguish of mind," on several occasions, as when it had been a question of dismissing Thurlow from the Chancellorship; or of recalling the Duke of York from Flanders, after his disastrous campaign; or of sending Malmesbury on his missions of peace to France; but on the question of relaxing the legal disabilities of Catholics, the King was adamant, and Pitt could prevail nothing. In 1795 the King consulted Lord Kenyon and the Attorney-General as to whether the repeal of the Test Acts was consistent with his Coronation oath, and though both his advisers replied in the affirmative, the King was over-persuaded to the contrary by Lord Chancellor Loughborough, and encouraged to resist any legislation of the sort. Doubtless, the King was within his constitutional and moral right; the point is that the Constitution, in allowing so much to the conscience of an individual, conceded too much. The Catholic Relief Bill of 1791 had removed certain disabilities, but the necessary declaration of Protestantism still precluded Catholics from serving in the Militia, at a time when the never-ending war demanded as large a recruiting area as possible.

In 1797 the Lords threw out a Bill which, with Pitt's support, had passed the Commons for removing this restric-

tion; nor did English Catholics derive any benefit from the Irish Act of 1793, which, whilst still excluding Catholics from the Irish Parliament, admitted them to the franchise, and to most Civil and Military offices in that country. Grattan's Bill for complete Irish emancipation in 1795, under the auspices of Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord-Lieutenant, was much disliked, from the first, by the King, who, on February 6, wrote Pitt a memorandum against it. That same day he expressed his horror of Lord Fitzwilliam's proposals; he expressed his surprise to the Duke of Portland at the idea of admitting Catholics to sit in the Irish Parliament; said that the whole plan strongly justified objections urged against previous indulgences; that it must lead to separation, and that it ran exactly counter to the very purpose for which his family had been invited to mount the throne of Great Britain, in preference to the House of Savoy. (*ib.* ii. Appendices XXIII., XXIV.) Consequently, on February 25, 1795, Lord Fitzwilliam resigned; on March 25, to the great grief of Ireland, he left the country, and on May 4, Grattan's Bill was defeated by 155 to 84 on the second reading, and thus a most hopeful policy for the conciliation of Ireland fell to the ground.

But for this failure there would probably have been no rebellion in 1798; no Act of Union in 1800. When Lord Cornwallis was sent as Viceroy to Ireland in 1798, the King wrote to Pitt on June 2 that Lord Cornwallis must be given clearly to understand that no indulgence could be granted to the Catholics, further than had been—the King was afraid—"unadvisedly done on former occasions." (*ib.* iii. Appendix XVI.) Yet Cornwallis wished the admission of Catholics to Parliament to be a condition of the Union, being of opinion that otherwise there could be no peace nor safety in Ireland. So, of course, thought Pitt. Then occurred the famous scene at the Levée, when the King inquired of Dundas: "What is this that this young Lord (Castlereagh) has brought over from Ireland, and is going to throw at my head?" When it was explained to him that it was Catholic emancipation, he exclaimed loudly: "I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure. This is the worst Jacobinical thing that

I ever heard of." Another story credits him with saying that he would rather beg his bread through Europe than consent to such an idea. After this, there could be nothing but surrender on one side or the other, and it was the Minister who had to surrender. It was in vain that he wrote the King on January 31 a masterly summary of the arguments for such a measure; for it was instantly rejected as nothing less than "the complete overthrow of the whole fabric of our happy Constitution."

Pitt accordingly surrendered, and Addington—the Speaker—took his place. On February 18, the King, writing to his Minister of the last seventeen years, for once, as "My dear Pitt," took it for granted that his beaten servant was then closing—much to his own sorrow—his political career. (*Stanhope*, iv. Appendix XXXII.) Canning, who resigned with Pitt, was one of those who had counselled him not to yield to the King. So many concessions, he told Lord Malmesbury, had been made, and so many important measures overruled from the King's opposition to them, that Government had been weakened exceedingly, and if Pitt had not made a stand, he could only have remained a nominal Minister, whilst the real power would have rested with the King's advisers who kept out of the public view. (*Diaries*, iv. 4.) So because the Minister had to give way to the Monarch on what was a cardinal condition of the success of the Union, that measure, instead of being—as the King thought—"one of the most useful measures effected during his reign," and one calculated "to give stability to the whole Empire," was the greatest legislative failure of our history.

It is hardly possible to doubt that the whole episode was a personal contest between Monarch and Minister, in which the latter was defeated. Canning told Lord Malmesbury that Pitt went out of office, not on the Catholic question alone, but on the manner of the King's opposition. (*ib.* iv. 75.) The King had for long been dissatisfied with Pitt's "authoritative manners," and when he sent for Wyndham and Lord Malmesbury to Weymouth, in August 1800, it had been with the idea of making them respectively his Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary. (*ib.* iv. 22.) Lord Malmesbury himself found fault with Pitt's "overweening

ambition, great and opinionative presumption, and perhaps not quite constitutional ideas with regard to the respect and attention due to the Crown." (*ib.* iv. 33.)

That their relations were by no means always smooth is well shown by Lord Sidmouth's story to Dean Milman, that on the question of the successor to Archbishop Moore "such strong language had never passed between a Sovereign and his Minister"; when the King prevailed, and the Bishop of Norwich was chosen. (*Stanhope*, iv. 252.)

The agitation of this difference with Pitt brought on another of the King's attacks of mental illness, about which, writing to Dr. Willis on March 7, 1801, the King asked him to inform Pitt that he was then quite recovered, and adding, "But what has *he* not to answer for, who is the cause of my having been ill at all?" It was in consequence of this that Pitt, in the kindness of his heart, meeting Dr. Willis at Addington's house and in Addington's presence, authorised him to tell the King that he would never again agitate the Catholic question, whether in or out of office, during the rest of the King's reign. (Malmesbury's *Diaries*, iv. 31, 32; *Stanhope*, iii. 304.) Six years later, the King declared that Pitt gave a pledge in writing to the same effect, and undertook to oppose any such measure whenever and by whomsoever proposed. (*Colchester*, ii. 200.)

It was on the same terms that Tierney took office in 1801, Lord Castlereagh in 1803, Canning in 1804, and Lord Grenville and Fox in 1806. When the Austrian Ambassador asked Fox whether he felt no difficulty about the Catholic question, Fox replied: "Not at all; I am determined not to annoy my Sovereign by bringing it forward." (*Stanhope*, iv. 391.) The spirit of consideration thus shown was beyond praise, but it is hardly good politics that measures deemed of essential importance to the welfare of the State should have to be postponed indefinitely for such a reason.

Although there had been no definite pledge that Emancipation should be a sequel to the Union with Ireland, the hope held out of it to the Irish nation justified the resignation of Pitt and Lord Grenville. "It was always my opinion," wrote the latter, "that the Union with Ireland would be a measure extremely incomplete and defective, as to some of

the most material benefits to be expected from it, unless immediate advantage were taken of it to attach the great body of the Irish Catholics to the measure itself, and to the Government, as administered under the control of the United Parliament. . . . The removal of the remaining disqualifications from Parliament, and from office, seemed to me the one indispensable feature of such a system." (February 1, 1801, Buckingham's *George III.*, iii. 128.) He and Pitt had devised a plan for substituting a political for the sacramental test, for all members of Parliament, office-holders, ministers, and teachers; and this plan "having been stated to the Cabinet was approved by the majority of the King's servants." (*ib.* iii. 130.) But the King would have none of it.

So from February 1801 to May 1804, Addington held the place that had been Pitt's for seventeen years; but the Catholic question remained as a chronic cause of friction, to the breaking up of Ministries and the shattering of political alliances, and the disturbance of the kingdom. Though Pitt, within three weeks of his resignation, had set the King's mind completely at ease on the question (Malmesbury's *Diaries*, iv. 119), the question remained the great weapon used by those who wished to keep the King hostile to Pitt. It was perpetually dinned into the royal ears that Pitt was as strongly bent as ever on emancipation, and that all suggestions to the contrary were with a view to returning to power. (*ib.* iv. 162, 172.)

The plottings for Pitt's return to power had almost succeeded by February 1804, when the King again fell ill and so remained, more or less, through the four following critical months. Meantime, war with France had begun again in May 1803, and 100,000 French soldiers at Boulogne at least threatened an invasion. It was a time for a political union and for a strong Government. Pitt's letter of March 29 to Lord Melville expressed his desire to form a Government which should be based on the extinction of parties, and in which Fox, Grenville, and others should share the councils of his Cabinet. But he felt that a proposal to the King "to take into a share in his councils persons against whom he had long entertained such strong and natural objections, ought never to be made to him but in such a manner as to leave

him a free option." (*Stanhope*, iv. 142.) Again it was the monarch's personal animosity that stood in the way of the national welfare, but the national welfare demanded that the risk of the royal displeasure should be run. On April 21, 1804, Pitt accordingly wrote to the King, with whom he had had no political interview for three years, a letter expressive of his opinions, and of his determination to avoid committing himself to any engagement, the effects of which could be likely to occasion—in any contingency—a sentiment of dissatisfaction or uneasiness in His Majesty's mind, (*ib.* iv. Appendix III.) In plain English, he made a bid for power, and a promise to drop the Catholic question. On April 29, Addington resigned, and next day Pitt received the King's orders for the plan of a new Ministry. The Catholics were sacrificed to Royalty.

On May 2, 1804, Pitt replied to the King, in a long letter to Lord Chancellor Eldon, intimating his desire for a Government "drawn without exception from parties of all descriptions, and without reference to former differences and divisions." Such a Government, destructive of all appreciable opposition in Parliament or the country, would make alliances on the Continent more easy against the common foe, and enable the Catholic question to be shelved from discussion. Therefore, he wished to include Fox and Lord Grenville in any new arrangement, and he expressed a wish for a personal interview with the King.

The King, in reply to the Chancellor, doubted whether Pitt would wish for an interview after receipt of his reply; he would probably prefer to "prepare another essay, containing as many empty phrases and as little information as the one he had before transmitted." (*ib.* iv. 166.) The reply itself was an amazing one. It began by lamenting that Pitt had taken so rooted a dislike to Addington, who had so handsomely come forward when Pitt had resigned, "to support his King and country when the most ill-digested and dangerous proposition was brought forward by the enemies of the Established Church." He could "never forget the wound that was intended at the Palladium of our Church Establishment, the Test Act, and the indelicacy—not to call it worse—of wanting His Majesty to forego his solemn

Coronation oath." He could not be satisfied unless Pitt made as strong an assurance of his support of that wise law, as he did in 1796, when he said that the smallest alteration in it would be a death-wound to the British Constitution. He was astonished that Pitt should, for one moment, harbour the thought of bringing "such a man" as Fox before his royal notice. If Pitt repeated the idea, or proposed Lord Grenville, he could not accept his services, but if he yielded on these points, His Majesty did not object to his forming a plan of Government. (*Stanhope*, iv. Appendix IX., X.)

On May 6, Pitt replied in a firm and graceful letter, traversing the King's ideas on the Catholic question, but promising to refrain from again pressing it—denying all personal dislike to Fox—and ending with a declaration that, unless the King would deign to see him, he could no longer hope that his "feeble services" could be employed to the King's advantage, or to his own satisfaction. So, on May 7, a three hours' interview took place between the King and Pitt, at which, when the latter expressed satisfaction at the King's looking better than after his recovery from his previous illness, the King gracefully replied: "That is not to be wondered at. I was then on the point of parting with an old friend; I am now about to regain one." (*ib.* iv. 170.) So the wound was pleasantly healed. But about Fox, there could be no question, though it was of little use for Pitt to drop the Catholic cause, unless his great rival did the same. In vain Pitt told the King that "he thought the most certain way of ensuring Mr. Fox never stirring the question again would be the including him in the new arrangement, as he (Mr. Pitt) would make the stipulation that he would not move it a *sine qua non* of such an arrangement." (Rose's *Diaries*, ii. 114.) The King was deaf to all argument. He expressed later to Rose his intense surprise that Pitt should have entertained the thought of suggesting Fox as a colleague, and still more "that he should have urged it with the earnestness he did, especially as Mr. Pitt himself was the person who had proposed expunging his name from the list of Privy Councillors. . . . His Majesty added that he had taken a positive determination not to admit Mr. Fox into his councils, even at the hazard of civil

war, and he had told Pitt the same thing." (*ib.* ii. 155, 182.)

Thus, at a most critical time in our history, the councils of the nation were weakened by the personal and religious prejudices of the King; for the consequence of Fox's exclusion was the exclusion of Lord Grenville and other friends, who refused to serve if Fox were proscribed, and the consequence of that was the prolongation of the war. Pitt had intended Fox for his Foreign Secretary; on the mere rumour of such a thing, and of Livingstone's having come from France with a view to negotiate, the funds on May 17 rose one per cent. (*ib.* ii. 136), and when in June of the same year, 1804, an opening for making peace occurred, no steps towards it were taken because Mr. Pitt "thought no good consequences could result from the communication" that had been made to him. (*ib.* ii. 150.) With Fox at his side, he might have thought differently; as it was, the Minister responsible for the country's safety was deprived of the help on which he relied for success, and was forced to expose his new Government to all that opposition in Parliament which he had been so anxious to avoid. The Duke of Grafton's comment was a fair one: "The King's unwillingness to have a solid and firm administration is wonderful, and the narrow policy of St. James's continued still, and perhaps it is the source from whence have flowed those misfortunes and sufferings which Europe is enduring." (*Autobiography*, 369.)

The continuance of the war for another ten years, and the dangerous Catholic agitation for another twenty-five, may be fairly attributed to the action thus taken by the King, in the teeth of the advice of his First Minister; and what makes the matter worse is, that during the whole period of this agitating negotiation, the King was only fitfully right in his mind. Both Lady Uxbridge and Mrs. Harcourt gave Lord Malmesbury the same pitiful account of him, and of the distress his condition caused his family, for, whilst apparently quite right when talking on business, or to his Ministers, in private life he was harsh and incoherent, quite unlike his usual character. He made capricious changes everywhere, from the Lord Chamberlain to the

grooms and footmen; he removed the Lords of the Bedchamber without a shadow of reason. (*Diaries*, iv. 310, 318.)

An acute observer like Lord Malmesbury perceived that it was a question of passing a Regency Bill without delay, but who could suggest it to the King? The persons who saw most of the King were "quite incapable—perfectly torpid courtiers," yet if it became a contest between the King *ill* and the Prince *well*, about the nature of a Regency, the common and usual bonds of opposition might be overstepped, and "civil discord, if not civil war, was not absolutely impossible." (*ib.* iv. 308.) So the country remained at actual war, and was confronted with civil war, because there was virtually no provision in the Constitution against possible mental failure in the person at its head.

The evil consequences soon manifested themselves. The strain caused by his inability to include in his Ministry such formidable opponents as Fox and his friends told severely on Pitt's health. In September 1805 he again tried to win the King's consent to such an alleviation of his burden as he had desired before, but His Majesty was more obdurate than ever: he would on no account suffer Fox. On January 8, 1806, within a few weeks of his death, Pitt remarked to Lord Melville that he hoped the King would not live to repent sooner than he expected of the rejection of the advice tendered to him at Weymouth (*Stanhope*, iv. 333, 369); and as the immediate consequence of Pitt's death was the Ministry of Lord Grenville, with Fox for Foreign Minister, it is not impossible that such tardy and fruitless repentance crossed the King's mind. But how different might have been the history of the country, and of Europe, had their destinies not depended—in May 1804—on the caprice of a King mentally incompetent even to conduct his own household.

CHAPTER XI

George the Conqueror

George III. was no more to blame than the majority of his subjects for holding that the admission of Catholics to the Army and Navy, to civil offices, or to voting for or sitting in Parliament, would be fatal to Protestantism or even to the political connection between the two islands. In reality, emancipation was the one chance of the success of the Act of Union, and the King by his personal opposition to it remains more than any one responsible before history for the shipwreck of that Act. With the best intentions in the world, his action in this matter was a political calamity to the country. Yet the real blame rests not so much with him as with the political system which conferred on him this virtually absolute power.

Contemporaries, who could not see into the future, did not easily perceive this, and to most of them, as to Lord Malmesbury, the King was a Sovereign "to whose kingly virtues, and to whose manly and uniform steady exertion of them during a reign of forty years, this country and every subject in it, owed the preservation of its liberties and everything that is valuable to him." (*Diaries*, iv. 15.) It is only fair to his memory to remember this, and to set it against the judgment of another great contemporary, Lord Holland, in whose eyes there was "nothing great, kind, open, or graceful" in the King's character or manners, not one single brilliant qualification. (*Further Whig Memoirs*, 61, 66.)

After Pitt's death in January 1806, the sort of Coalition Government of "All the Talents" that Pitt had wished for came into being. The King had to submit to Lord Grenville as Prime Minister and to Fox as Foreign Secretary, together with partisans of Lord Sidmouth (Addington). For Lord Grenville, unfortunately, the King had an "insuperable"

and " extreme " dislike (*Rose*, ii. 381, 384); as he had had for his father. In the next few years he found him " even more offensive than Mr. Fox ever was " (*ib.* ii. 391), for after Fox's death in September 1806, Lord Grenville became and remained the staunch supporter of the just claims of the Catholics.

Lord Castlereagh's *Memoirs* (iv. 379–92) give a graphic account of the struggle which ensued between the King and his Ministers. On February 9, 1807, Lord Spencer sent the King from the Duke of Bedford, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, a dispatch on behalf of the Catholics, asking for some assurance of relief as an alternative to a petition to Parliament. The concessions they asked for were the removal of restrictions from Catholic military service and from promotion in the Army; permission to serve as sheriffs; and admission to the Corporations. In the view of the Cabinet, divided as it was on the larger measure of enfranchisement, the concession of allowing the Catholics and Dissenters military service in England was of the highest importance to the safety of the Empire at a time when the interminable war called for as large a supply of fighting material as could be extorted from the patient population.

But the King remained prejudiced and was in a position to indulge his prejudices. He replied on February 10 that he could not but " express the most serious concern that any proposal should have been made to him for the introduction of a clause in the Mutiny Bill which would remove a restriction upon the Roman Catholics, forming in his opinion a most essential part of the question, and so strongly connected with the whole that the King trusted his Parliament never would, under any circumstances, agree to it. His Majesty's objections did not result from any slight motive; they had never varied; for they arose from the principles by which he had been guided through life, and to which he was determined to adhere. On this question a line had been drawn from which he could not depart. He had hoped that it would never again have been agitated." (*Castlereagh*, iv. 379.)

Lord Grenville, in his reply of the same day, enclosing a minute from the Cabinet, could not refrain " from adding (to the Cabinet's insistence on the measure) the earnest en-

treaties of an attached and faithful servant" that the King would reconsider the matter. He pointed out the incalculable advantage which would result from enlarging the area of recruitment, and finished by saying that "nothing but a deep impression of the indispensable necessity of some step of this nature at the present moment, and the peculiar advantage of the measure now recommended in its tendency to prevent difficulties of the most embarrassing nature could induce him to think himself warranted in recommending it with such extreme earnestness."

The Cabinet was equally insistent. To allow Catholics in England to hold commissions in the Army was, they argued, only an extension of the similar liberty that had been granted in 1793 to Catholics in Ireland. They represented to the King that "the formidable dangers which now surrounded the country, from a state of affairs in Europe almost unparalelled, appeared to them to impose upon them the indispensable duty of proposing to Parliament to unite in the common cause the military efforts of the whole population of Your Majesty's empire, and to secure the best interests of their country from ultimately sinking under the increased preponderance of France." They feared too the bad impression which refusal would cause in Ireland, and declared they would "think themselves deeply criminal if they could disguise this peril from him."

The King replied on February 12 that "however painful he had found it to reconcile to his feelings the removal of objections to any proposal" remotely connected with the Catholic question, he would not prevent his Ministers from submitting the clause to Parliament. But, whilst so far reluctantly conceding, he deemed it necessary to declare that he could not go one step further; and he trusted that this proof of his forbearance would secure him from being at a future period distressed by any further proposal connected with this question.

Yet the theory of the Constitution is that the King acts on the advice of his responsible Ministers, and that the Royal veto has ceased to exist. The story shows that George III. cared not a straw for his responsible Ministers, and that he vetoed whatever measures were opposed to his "feelings."

Such measures could be killed at their birth; if they were not, they could always be killed in their passage through the two Houses. But the King never considered even the final veto as dead. Writing to Lord North on June 19, 1774, about the Quebec Bill, which some persons desired him to veto, he said: "Though I hope the Crown will ever be able to prevent a Bill it thinks detrimental to be thrown out in one or other House of Parliament, without making use of its right of refusing its assent, yet I shall never consent to using any expression that tends to establish that at no time the making use of that power is necessary." (North, *Letters*, i. 192.)

The same day (February 12) the Cabinet sent the King another dispatch from Ireland, which contained the news that an influential meeting in Ireland had decided to petition Parliament: "a circumstance of great difficulty and embarrassment in every view of the question." They hoped for beneficial results from the measure he had consented to, and disclaimed any wish to involve him in anything painful to his feelings.

On the evening of March 2, the draft of the clauses in the Mutiny Bill on the admission of Catholics to the Army was sent to the King, and returned by him next morning without objection raised. On March 4, Lord Howick, believing himself to have the King's consent, brought the clauses before Parliament, and a week later, the King denied having given such consent.

The Opposition thus saw its chance of upsetting the Government, and of doing so by the personal influence of the King. On March 12, the Duke of Portland, the Whig of olden days, wrote to the King: "I must fairly state to Your Majesty that your wishes must be distinctly known, and that your present Ministers should not have any pretext for equivocating on the subject, on any ground whatever, to pretend ignorance of Your Majesty's sentiments and determination, not only to withhold your sanction to the present measure, but to use all your influence in resisting it." If His Majesty saw fit to change his Ministers, the Duke offered himself. (*Malmesbury*, iv. 360.) On or about the same day, the Government offered to withdraw the Bill, on the compromise

that the Irish Catholic petition should be received and discussed, and that Ministers should reserve the right to bring forward in the future any motions they pleased for removing restrictions from the Catholics. (*ib.* iv. 371.) On March 15 the Government withdrew its Bill unconditionally, but not without drawing up a minute, which protested strongly to the King against his action. In it they said: "In stating to Parliament the determination to make this very painful sacrifice to what they conceive to be their painful duty, they trust Your Majesty will see the indispensable necessity of their expressing, with the same openness by which their language on that subject has been uniformly marked, the strong persuasion which each of them individually entertains of the advantages which would result to the empire from a different course of policy towards the Catholics of Ireland. These opinions they have never concealed from Your Majesty. They continue strongly impressed with them, and it is absolutely indispensable to their public character that they should openly avow them, both on the present occasion and in the possible event of the Catholic Petition in Parliament, a discussion which they have all equally endeavoured to prevent." They added that they could not look on Ireland, the only vulnerable part of the empire, without the greatest uneasiness; it was essential that the deference which they had felt it their duty to show to the opinions and feelings of His Majesty, should not be understood as restraining them from submitting from time to time, for His Majesty's decision, such measures about Ireland as "circumstances should require." And they ended with a strong assurance of their "sincere and anxious regard for His Majesty's personal ease and comfort."

Speaking of this surrender, Lord Holland says: "This concession was very painful to me. I passed the most unpleasant night that I ever experienced from political anxiety. The surrender of our opinion was, as I then thought and still think, quite wrong." (*Whig Memoirs*, ii. 202.)

The King's triumph was complete, and on March 17 came the conqueror's reply. He commended the deference shown to his feelings, but deprecated his Ministers as individuals submitting to Parliament opinions "known to be so decidedly

contrary to his principles. He thought it due to himself to declare at once most unequivocally that upon this subject his sentiments could never change; that he could never agree to any concessions to the Catholics which his confidential servants might in future propose to him; and that, under these circumstances, and after what had passed, his mind could not be at ease unless he should receive a positive assurance from them, which should effectually relieve him from all future apprehension." He requested that their determination should be "stated on paper."

The pretensions of despotism never reached a higher watermark in England. As Lord Holland wrote: "He required an assurance in writing from the Ministers that they would never press upon him, in future, any measure connected with the Catholic question; in other words, that his advisers would never give him advice upon one great and important branch of public affairs, in their view of the subject involving the character, and even safety of the empire." (*Whig Memoirs*, ii. 203.)

Lord Grenville, on March 18, sent the Conqueror the Cabinet's reply drawn up the day before, on receipt of the King's letter. They reminded him that when they accepted office no such assurance in limitation of their duties as Ministers had been required of them; that had such assurance been demanded, they would have expressed the absolute impossibility of thus fettering the free exercise of their judgment. "Those who are entrusted by Your Majesty with the administration of your extensive Empire are bound by every obligation to submit to Your Majesty without reserve the best advice which they can frame to meet the various exigencies and dangers of the times. The situation of Ireland appears to Your Majesty's servants to constitute the most formidable part of the present difficulties of the Empire. This subject must, as they conceive, require a continued and vigilant attention, and a repeated consideration of every fresh circumstance which may call for the interposition of Your Majesty's Government, or of Parliament. In forbearing to urge any further, while employed in Your Majesty's service, a measure which would, in their judgment, have tended to compose the present uneasiness in Ireland,

and have been productive of material benefit to the empire, they humbly submit to Your Majesty that they have gone to the utmost possible limits of their public duty, but that it would be deeply criminal in them, with the general opinions which they entertain on the subject, to bind themselves to withhold from Your Majesty, under all the various circumstances which may arise, those counsels which may eventually appear to them indispensably necessary for the peace and tranquillity of Ireland, and for defeating the enterprises of the enemy against the very existence of Your Majesty's Empire. Your Majesty's servants must ever deeply regret that any difficulty should arise on their part in giving the most prompt obedience to any demand which Your Majesty considers as indispensable to the ease of Your Majesty's mind. But it is not possible for them, consistently with any sense of those obligations which must always attach on the sworn councillors of Your Majesty, to withdraw a statement which was not made without the most anxious consideration of every circumstance which could be suggested by their earnest desire for Your Majesty's ease, comfort, and happiness; or to give assurances which would impose upon them a restraint incompatible with the faithful discharge of the most important duty which they owe to Your Majesty." (*ib.* ii. 270–320.)

Lord Grenville, writing to his brother, Lord Buckingham, on March 17, thus expressed himself: "We have heard much on this Catholic question of the King's coronation oath. He appears to have forgotten that our oath as Privy Councillors, as well as our manifest duty, obliges us to give him true counsel to the best of our judgment. How is this oath and duty to be fulfilled if on the affairs of that part of his kingdom which is exposed to the greatest danger, both within and without, we bind ourselves by a previous promise not to give him such advice as in our judgment is best calculated to meet the evil; nay, not even to bring forward any advice on the subject connected with it." (Buckingham's *Court and Cabinets of George III.*, iv. 143.)

This is surely the common sense of the matter. Conflicting accounts have been given of the quarrel between the King and the Cabinet of "All the Talents"; and it may

well be that the trouble arose rather from a misunderstanding between George III. and Lord Howick than from that cool duplicity with which Lord Holland charges the King's memory. It may also well be that the measure itself was not of the importance that the Cabinet assigned to it. Nevertheless, the story under any aspect shows how very far from the truth is the popular tradition that the King in our Constitution has no will apart from his Ministers' will. Here we have a case where the Ministers' will lay in one direction, and the King's in another, and where the King's prevailed; where the King's claim to restrict his Ministers' initiative on one subject was clearly one that might be claimed over all subjects. The King's action was a real bid for a practical despotism, and the stand made by Grenville and his Cabinet against so outrageous a claim is one of the most pleasing incidents in the history of the struggle for liberty. But, of course, it brought the Ministry to an end. Ministers saw the King on March 18, and explained their inability to give the pledge he had demanded of them. According to Lord Colchester, the Grenville Government neither resigned nor was dismissed (ii. 104); it simply died from the cold blast of the Royal displeasure. In vain the Chancellor had warned the King against trying to extort the pledge "never under any circumstances to propose to the Closet any measures of concession to the Catholics or anything connected with it"; had told him that he was on the brink of a precipice, and that if he dismissed his Ministers he would never know another hour's tranquillity. The King, though deeply agitated, thanked him for his honesty, but despised his advice. (*Romilly*, ii. 189.) The Ministry came to an end on March 25, and the Duke of Portland came again into power.

Never was Minister more justly disappointed than Grenville, whose hope had been "to unite Ireland in heart and affection with England" (November 25, 1808, Buckingham's *George III.*, iv. 281), and one can sympathise with his complaint of the difficulty for a Minister to govern the country "with the certainty that a Court intrigue would be incessantly at work with ample means of depriving him of all power to be of real use." (*ib.* iv. 289.) "What hope could there be

of success," he writes to his brother on September 3, 1909, " with the Court against us ? " (*ib.* iv. 355).

But there was one subject on which the Court failed of success ; for on the very day the Ministry fell the Royal assent was given to the Slave Trade Abolition Bill. When the agitation against this iniquitous traffic began in 1788, Lord Shelburne quoted the opposition to it, and the enthusiasm for its abolition of the majority in the towns that most profited by it, on the principles of morality, freedom, and commercial honour, as proof of the general liberalism of public opinion at that time. (April 7, 1788.) But, though Pitt was strong against the trade, and supported its abolition with his highest eloquence, he was opposed in his own Cabinet by Dundas, Thurlow, and Lord Hawkesbury, and, above all, by the King. It was in deference to the King that he suffered the continuance of the trade for the rest of his life. (*Lecky*, v. 344.) A difficulty, says Clarkson, more insuperable than opposition within the Cabinet, occurred in 1791, " much too delicate to be mentioned," after which all Pitt's efforts were useless. (*Slave Trade*, ii. 506.) Nevertheless, his most eloquent speech in Parliament against the trade was in 1792.

The King and the Court stoutly resisted the progress of the measure. When the Duke of Clarence opposed it in the Lords in 1807, he spoke for all the Royal Family, except the Duke of Gloucester. (Buckingham, *George III.*, 150–2.) Lord Holland testifies that the King and the Prince were as hostile as ever to the measure. (*Whig Memoirs*, ii. 57.) Yet, on October 25, 1809, when Sir Samuel Romilly attended a Jubilee service in Durham Cathedral, he was provoked " to a degree of indignation he could ill restrain " by the gross adulation of the preacher, who ascribed to the King the merit of the abolition of the slave trade, when for years his personal opposition to it, supported by that of his friends in both Houses, had been the chief obstacle to its being carried. (ii. 302.) But sycophancy has been the cause of many historical legends.

On April 9, 1807, there was a long debate which did not close till 6 a.m. on Brand's resolution that it was contrary to the first duties of Ministers to restrain themselves by any

express or implied pledge not to offer the King any advice which the circumstances of the moment might require. But the House passed to the order of the day, and so disposed of the resolution by 258 to 226. As Lord Colchester said: "The issue of the debate was highly important to the monarchy as well as to the reigning King;" the House being unwilling to call the King, as it were, to the bar to pronounce on the merits or demerits of his personal conduct in conversation or correspondence between him and his Ministers, or on the propriety of his motives in changing them. "The House agreed on all sides that no pledges should be required from Ministers that they would abstain from advice of any sort," whilst refusing to consider the specific case in which the King had attempted to extort such a pledge. (*Diary*, ii. 119.) The King commended the good sense the House had shown; it had practically sanctioned an extension of his prerogative, of which he made yet another attempt to avail himself before his final and total incapacity fell upon him.

As so narrow a majority promised no long tenure to the Duke of Portland's Ministry, a dissolution was resolved on, and in the ensuing General Election of June 1807 corruption reigned supreme. The new Ministry bought up all the seats they could, at very high prices, and the King was believed to contribute a large sum from his privy purse. (*Romilly*, ii. 206.) The result answered expectations, for the Government majority, which had been 155 before the election, rose to 350 after it—so potent was the cry of Church and King, and the influence of gold. No small part of the money which the country lavished on the King was turned habitually to its own corruption and enslavement. But the King stuck to his idea of a pledge. During the interregnum between the dying Duke of Portland's resignation on September 3, 1809, and Perceval's appointment on November 2, the King wrote Perceval a long letter, authorising him to make overtures to Lord Grey and Lord Grenville to join in a Ministry under himself and Lord Liverpool, lamenting that he thus had to have recourse to men from whom he had received such injurious treatment, and expressing his strong displeasure at their conduct. In conversation he expressed a wish that

these Lords should first give a pledge not to raise the Catholic question, but Perceval protested that it was utterly impossible for them to do so, without losing all character with the public, and advised the King to rely on the safety of a mixed and divided Cabinet. To this the King agreed, but not without a strong assurance that he would rather abandon the Crown than consent to Catholic emancipation. (*Rose*, ii. 394, 395, September 30, 1809.)

When the great and final cloud fell on the King's brain in 1810, and the problem of the Catholics passed to the Regent, the pretext was that it was indelicate to deal with it during the King's life. Whereon Lord Grenville commented bitterly on January 6, 1812: "Will the rest of the world stand still for him, and will Ireland be as easy to be settled then as it would be even now, when it is about ten times more difficult than it was ten or twelve years ago?" (Buckingham's *Regency*, i. 179.)

So George III. passed from the stage, to the last true to his mother's exhortation to show himself a King. During fifty years he had triumphed over Ministry after Ministry. His patriotism had been as sincere as it had often been mistaken. His abilities had been great, but his will greater. He had fought long and gallantly for Prerogative, and had ended a victor. His enthusiasm for the Constitution had come near to adoration. Nor can one wonder, seeing how much the Constitution had placed in his hands all the trump cards in the rubber of politics. Yet to the Constitution he had been a martyr, patient under a burden that weighed him down. On a summary retrospect of his reign it would be difficult to pronounce whether, under the Constitution he loved so well, himself or his subjects had suffered the most.

REIGN II: GEORGE IV

CHAPTER I

Regency Troubles

One element that makes for difficulty in a Constitutional Monarchy is the influence of the Heir-Apparent, whose position and opinions, as a source of future favours, are often scarcely of less importance than those of the reigning monarch himself. This cause of conflict and divided counsels marred the whole reign of George III., owing to the notorious divergence of political opinion between himself and the Prince of Wales. Both Ministries and policies depended entirely on the pure chance of the King's keeping his health.

This became very manifest when in October 1810 George III. fell ill for the last time and the old difficulty of 1788 about the Regency revived. Perceval, as Prime Minister at the time, ultimately carried the old restrictions on the Regent, whilst the Whigs adhered to their old principle of the Prince of Wales' indefeasible right to the Regency. On December 19, 1810, both the Prince and his seven brothers protested against the restrictions. These Princes were a constant difficulty. The Duke of Wellington, talking with Creevey on July 17, 1818, in allusion to the Government's defeats in the previous session over proposed additions to the establishments of the Dukes of Clarence, Kent, and Cumberland on their marriages, remarked that these Princes were "the damnedest millstones about the necks of any Government that could be imagined. They have insulted—personally insulted—two-thirds of the gentlemen of England, and how can it be wondered at that they take their revenge upon them when they get them in the House of Commons? It is their only opportunity, and I think, by God, they are

quite right to use it." (i. 277.) But despite the royal opposition the restrictions came into force in February 1811, and continued in force till the following February.

It was expected that the Regent would lose no time in displacing Perceval's Government in favour of a Whig Ministry, and the places were all arranged; but an intricate intrigue began, in which Sheridan played a leading part, and of which the result was to keep Lords Grey and Grenville out, and Perceval in. On February 4, 1811, a letter to Perceval from the Prince informed him that the decision to continue with him as Prime Minister was due "only to the irresistible impulse of filial duty and affection to his beloved and afflicted father." Wilberforce in his Diary assigns the Prince's decision to the advice of Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Hertford. (iii. 494.) The Queen also seems to have had a share in the intrigue. The Prince's Whig principles and his Whig friends went to the winds. There had been a time when the Prince had warmly cultivated the friendship of the Duke of Norfolk, but the Duke under the Regency fell into disfavour at Court for his opinions, and the Regent "slighted and shunned the Duke as well as the rest of his early friends." (*Romilly*, iii. 67.)

On February 13, 1811, the Regent wrote his celebrated letter to the Duke of York to express the wish that some of those persons with whom the early habits of his life had been formed would strengthen his hands and form part of his Government; and the Duke was authorised to communicate this wish to Lord Grey, who, he had no doubt, would make it known to Lord Grenville. It is probable that the wish was sincere, and that the Regent wished them to strengthen the existing Government, or perhaps to form a new one. But the two Lords thoroughly mistrusted the Regent. "I have been betrayed once by the King," wrote Lord Grenville to his brother, "and I have no taste of affording to his son the same opportunity, when I have so little cause to doubt that he has the same disposition." (Buckingham's *Regency*, i. 224.) They considered the Regent's mode of approach to them as "an unworthy trick of attempting to separate them," and were highly incensed. They resented the notion that they could co-operate with Perceval at all; for, as Romilly

wrote, " nothing could contribute more effectually to destroy all confidence in all public men than so base and unprincipled a coalition " between men who differed so widely on the Catholic question; they expressed themselves in their answer to the Duke as " firmly persuaded of the necessity of a total change of the present system of the Government in Ireland, and of the immediate repeal of those civil disabilities under which so large a portion of His Majesty's subjects still laboured on account of their religious opinions." Wherefore they declined the offer.

The story goes that when the Regent informed the Cabinet of his intended proposal to the two Lords, Perceval undertook to draw it up, but that when it reached Carlton House the Regent would not have it at any price; he complained most sarcastically of Perceval's composition and style. When Lord Eldon, who was the bearer of the letter, suggested that Perceval would gladly amend it, the Regent replied that " he hoped he was too much of a gentleman to interfere with any man's style; that it was a great misfortune to Mr. Perceval to write in one that would disgrace a respectable washerwoman, but that he could not set up for his schoolmaster." He added that Perceval wished the overture to be refused, but that he himself wished it to succeed.

And this seems possible; for it was the opinion of the narrator of the episode that the Regent was in earnest; that the rejection of his proposal was too peremptory, and that, had the Lords in question met the Prince, Perceval's power " would have crumbled into dust." And considering what ensued, and that the shelving of the Catholic claims darkened English politics for the next seventeen years, and were then only granted to avert civil war, one cannot but share the writer's regret at the course which was taken.

The Regent was most indignant at the reception his letter had met with. Lord Grenville, he declared, was the only one who had behaved like a gentleman and had not publicly insulted him. He was reported to have said that he could easily forgive Lord Grenville, but that he would rather abdicate than see Lord Grey or Tierney in his service. (*ib.* i. 298, 311.) Lord Holland says that the Regent never concealed his personal dislike for Lord Grey (*Further Whig*

Memoirs, 144); it was then an animosity of twenty-seven years' standing. Creevey, writing to his wife on May 25, 1812, says: "It is *true* that Princey told Wellington that Grey and Grenville were a couple of scoundrels." (i. 157.)

But the Regent was impartial in his dislikes. He could as little bear the Tory Lord Sidmouth as the Liberal Lord Grey. When on February 1, 1812, Perceval suggested to him the addition of Lord Sidmouth and his friends to the Ministry, he exclaimed: "Is it possible, Mr. Perceval, that you are ignorant of my feelings and sentiments towards that person? I now tell you, I never will have confidence in him or in any person who presses him upon me." When a few days later Perceval returned to the charge and pressed the Regent to authorise him to declare that he had the Prince's *entire* and *exclusive* confidence, in whatever quarter he might have occasion of such authority, the Prince positively and repeatedly refused "in a tone of sarcasm and disgust that Mr. Perceval would not easily forget." (*Buckingham*, i. 219.) It can have been no easy berth to be Prime Minister to the Regent, nor can one be surprised at Lord Grenville's reluctance to become his chief servant. For who could have succeeded under such conditions?

The following story illustrates the footing on which the Regent stood towards his Prime Minister. One day he mentioned to Perceval his intention of giving the bishopric of Oxford to William Jackson. "On that point," objected Perceval, "I am positively pledged." "Positively pledged, Mr. Perceval?" said the Regent. "Positively pledged to give away one of my bishoprics? I don't understand you." "I mean that it was the King's positive and declared intention to give it to Dean Legge." "Mr. Perceval," replied the Regent, "if I had any direct intimation of what was really the King's wish on the subject, I would not only make Dean Legge Bishop of Oxford, but Archbishop of Canterbury, if it were in my power; but as this is not the case I shall make my own Bishop, and I desire never more to hear what were the King's wishes on such subjects through a third person." (Buckingham's *Regency*, i. 171, January 4, 1812.)

When Perceval was shot by Bellingham in the House of Commons on May 11, 1812, so great was the revulsion of

feeling against the policy of repression at home and war abroad with which he was identified that stocks rose nearly two per cent. (*ib.* ii. 298.) Sir Samuel Romilly wrote: "The most savage expressions of joy and exultation were heard in the streets and about the avenues of the House, with regrets that others had not shared his fate." (iii. 35.) At Nottingham a mob paraded the streets with drums and banners exulting in the deed (*ib.* iii. 297); to such depths had the country fallen under a system which gave virtually supreme power to a Prince like the Regent. Perceval's death let loose the hurricane. The Cabinet wished for overtures to be made to Lord Wellesley and Canning, or to Lords Grenville and Grey. On May 21, 1812, the House of Commons carried by a majority of four an address in favour of a firmer Administration, which caused the momentary resignation of the Cabinet. Then negotiations of a confusing nature took place with the King, during which it seemed likely at one moment that Lord Wellesley, at another that Lord Moira, would emerge as Prime Minister. But on June 3 Lord Wellesley gave it up, powerless against the "dreadful animosities" that prevailed among the leading men.

The Regent was nearly driven to distraction. Creevey describes how on May 25, late at night, the Regent sent for Lord Moira "and flung himself upon his mercy. Such a scene I never heard of. The young monarch cried loud and long—in short, he seems to have been very nearly in convulsions." (i. 158.) The next day Creevey met Sheridan, who described the Prince's state of perturbation of mind as "beyond anything he had ever seen." (*ib.* i. 159.) But the rivalries and jealousies of competing politicians were indeed severe tests for any man's brain. In an interview with Lord Wellesley on May 25, whilst expressing still his sympathy with the Catholic claims, he declared that nothing could ever induce him to employ the Opposition, which he abused with "outrageous violence"; for, though he had no objection to one or two of them as individuals, as a body he would rather abdicate the Regency than "ever come into contact with them." "The Prince," wrote Fremantle on May 28, 1812, "by all accounts continues in the same state of helplessness and irresolution in which he

has passed the last week." (*Buckingham*, i. 322.) "Never was there such a state of things seen. The violence and the contempt expressed of the Prince Regent are beyond all imagination and are truly shocking to hear of." (*ib.* i. 335.) Real anarchy reigned.

It was the same old difficulty as in the days of the Regent's father: that of reconciling the responsible Government of the country with the secret irresponsible Government of favourites behind the throne. Fox had opposed the public funeral voted for Pitt in January 1806, on the ground that his dead rival had supported a system of government which had unfortunately prevailed throughout the whole of George III.'s reign; "that of invisible influence, more powerful than the public servants of the Crown." (*Colchester*, ii. 31.) Nor had things improved in the last six years. Hence some plain speaking on the subject in both Houses. In the Commons Lord Lyttleton described it as notorious "that the Regent was surrounded with favourites and, as it were, hemmed in with minions, not one of whom was of any character." In the Lords on March 19, 1812, Lord Darnley said that "the continuance of Ministers in office depended on a breath—upon advisers not avowed. They rested upon persons not officially known in the House—upon persons who, for their own selfish objects, would poison the royal ear, and who, if allowed to remain, would prove the destruction either of the Prince or the country." (Buckingham's *Regency*, i. 338.)

But Lord Grey expressed himself with still more disagreeable clearness: "There existed an unseen and pestilent influence behind the throne, which it would be the duty of Parliament to brand with some signal mark of condemnation. It was the determination of himself and his friends not to accept office without coming to an understanding with Parliament for the abolition of this destructive influence." (*ib.* i. 339.)

The Prince took great offence at this speech. On May 31, 1812, the Duke of York, at the instance of and in company with Lord Moira, called on his brother to try to soften down his "twenty-seven years' animosity to Lord Grey." The Prince was very violent "and much ill blood was the issue

of this conference." He said at last to Lord Moira that before he would consent to the admission of Lord Grey to his counsels, he must have a satisfactory explanation of a phrase Lord Grey had used in his seat, namely, "of a certain pestilent secret influence which must be got rid of." But the Prince so far got over his personal antipathy as to authorise Lord Wellesley on June 1 to form a ministry and to communicate with Lords Grey and Grenville with regard to their forming part of it. They were to recommend four or five of their friends for the Regent's approval; the Regent himself nominating four, including Lord Wellesley as Prime Minister. This unfortunately they could not stand; they objected to the principle of disunion and jealousy, to the "supposed balance of contending interests in a Cabinet so measured out by preliminary stipulation, when the times required an Administration united in principle, and strong in mutual reliance; possessing also the confidence of the Crown and assured of its support in those healing measures which the public safety required." (*ib.* i. 342.)

But what chiefly caused the overtures to the two Lords to fail a second time was the difficulty of the Royal Household. The Household had always been considered the fair spoil of the party in power, and it was deemed a great concession to George III. that he should have been suffered by the Government of the Talents to keep any part of his Household. So at the interview with Lord Moira it was particularly asked whether the Household would be at their disposal. Lord Moira replied that no reserve had been placed upon the offer of service, but his answer pointed to the protection of the Household. A decided difference of opinion on the subject brought the conversation to an end "with mutual regrets." (*ib.* i. 356, June 6, 1812.)

According to Lord Holland, Lord Grey went about making an unguarded exposure of the Regent's duplicity in all companies, and this sank deep in the Royal mind. "The new Court was henceforward to the full intent as the old one on excluding the Whigs from all office, favour, or power." Nor were such offences confined to Lord Grey; for "we all incurred the guilt, if not the odium of charging his Royal Highness with ingratitude and perfidy. We all encouraged

every species of satire against him and his mistress. He retorted in language to the full as unmeasured and in assertions much more unfounded." (*Further Whig Memoirs*, 122.) But there is one bright spot in all this, for Lord Holland justly cites the conduct of Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, of Lord Wellesley, Canning, and Lord Liverpool in this crisis as disposing of the taunt that politics are nothing but a scramble for office. All of them sacrificed the prospect of place and power "for a creditable and sometimes an overstrained and fastidious regard to character and consistency. Every one of them might have obtained office by the sacrifice either of connections or opinions." (*ib.* 149.)

The failure of the Whigs to come into power was in the circumstances of the time disastrous; for it brought in a Tory Government under Lord Liverpool (June 7, 1812), which was destined to last for fifteen years, and during which there could be no chance for Catholic Emancipation. Lord Liverpool's Ministry came into power on the basis of a neutral attitude on this fundamental question. Some were for concession; more against it; the only common bond was hostility to Parliamentary Reform. No wonder that Creevey wrote on June 8 on Lord Liverpool's appointment: "This is beyond anything . . . was there ever anything equal to this?" (i. 165.) All that the nation was fated to suffer for the remainder of the Regency and through the reign of George IV. was thus due to the personal antagonism between the Sovereign and certain individual Ministers, who, if in office, might have saved the nation from the calamities it incurred.

Lord Liverpool's term of office did not begin auspiciously; for in that same month of June there was a message from the Regent on the disturbed state of the country. In Lancashire and in parts of Cheshire and of the West Riding large bodies of men attacked the houses of master manufacturers and destroyed machinery, and a huge conspiracy of workmen bound themselves by secret oaths to give no evidence on trials to bring the guilty to justice. (*Colchester*, ii. 394.) A dismal period ensued. In March 1815, so violent was the opposition to the Corn-Taxing Bill that mobs thronged the approaches to Parliament and damaged the houses of sup-

porters of the measure. The battle of Waterloo the same year relieved the period, but it was at the cost of the long friendship between Lord Grey and Lord Grenville. The latter was all for the renewal of hostilities with France on Napoleon's return from Elba, whilst Lord Grey considered non-intervention the right policy for the country; holding that a war of aggression on France was unjustifiable and that we ought not to interfere with her right to choose what form of government she preferred. An uninfluential minority thought the same. "We are very bloody in this town (London)," wrote the Hon. H. Bennet, M.P., to Creevey in July 1815, after Waterloo; "people talk of making great examples, as if the French had not the right to have, independent of us, what government they liked best." (*Creevey*, i. 241.) Hardly was our own of such absolute perfection as to commend its adoption by our neighbours.

CHAPTER II

The Monarch and his Ministers

The strong mutual antipathy which existed between George IV. and the leading statesmen of his day was not the least of the difficulties with which monarchy had then to contend. Whilst ties of personal friendship between George III. and Lord North or Pitt had eased the course of that Sovereign, George IV. enjoyed no advantage of that sort. He was on terms of almost constant dislike to Perceval, Lord Grey, Lord Sidmouth, Lord Liverpool, and Canning. Lord Castlereagh alone seems to have been on a better footing with him. The difference of character between the King and most of his Ministers precluded anything like mutual regard, and the state of things was thus described by Greville: "Ministers did not conceal their contempt and dislike of the King, and it was one of the phenomena of the time that the King should have Ministers whom he abuses and hates, and who entertain corresponding sentiments of aversion to him." (i. 44.)

The King and Lord Liverpool were by nature antagonistic spirits. Arbuthnot's evidence shows that the Prime Minister was always glad to get Lord Castlereagh, if possible, to relieve him of personal discussions with the Sovereign, "which were ever painful and distressing." (*To Croker*, December 7, 1848; Croker's *Memoirs*, iii. 192.)

A rupture nearly occurred on the King's accession, for the new King's first thought was to get a divorce from Queen Caroline, and when Lord Liverpool's Government in the first instance refused him any help, he threatened them with dismissal; a power on the side of prerogative which tells heavily against popular government. On this occasion the expressed readiness of the Ministry to retire from his

service caused the monarch to relent. (*Colchester*, iii. 115, February 15, 1820.)

Croker, in his Diary for July 30, 1821, records how the King had complained to him of Lord Liverpool as "captious, jealous, and impracticable," objecting to everything, and even when he gave way, which he did nine times in ten, doing it with so bad a grace that it was worse than an absolute refusal. From which Croker inferred that Liverpool could not possibly continue as Prime Minister (i. 198), though he did so continue until 1827.

Lord Colchester gives the same account of their relations. The King declared that Liverpool had more irritability and less feeling than any man he ever knew. (iii. 330.) The position possibly explains the irritability. Many were the mortifications Liverpool met with because he would not comply with the wishes of certain courtiers regarding Church preferments. (iii. 234.) But he knew how to hold his own; as in the Sumner incident. The future Archbishop was then but a curate, and the King, at Lady Conyngham's request, to whose son, Lord Mount Charles, Sumner had been tutor, appointed him to a vacant canonry at Windsor, writing to Lord Liverpool to announce the fact. Sumner hurried off to Brighton to kiss the King's hand, but Lord Liverpool hurried there too, and declared that, unless the distribution of such patronage were left to him without interference, he could not carry on the Government, and that he would resign if Sumner were appointed. The King yielded, but the Duke of Wellington's evidence is that he never forgave the Minister his victory; that it "influenced every action of his life from that moment." (*Greville*, i. 47, May 2, 1821.)

These uncomfortable relations between the King and his Prime Minister clearly did not tend to a strong Government, and Liverpool continued to wish to add Canning to the Cabinet. But Canning's sympathy with Queen Caroline and with the claims of the Catholics made him more hateful to the King than even Liverpool himself. On July 7, 1821, the Duke of Wellington told Fremantle of the great resistance of the King to the idea of Canning's reintroduction to the Cabinet, as he could not forgive his conduct about the

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Queen; for to his instigation he attributed the opposition in the Lords to the Divorce Bill. Fremantle describes how he found the Duke "full of anger, vexation, and complaint of the difficulty in which the Cabinet was placed" by the attitude of the King, who kept up flirtations with the Opposition and was impatient at the idea of any reduction of the Army. As the King would have turned them out if he dared, the Cabinet was careful not to exasperate him. "You cannot imagine the state of irritation the Duke was in this morning. The Duke said: 'You have no idea of the mischief that is done to me by persons who have an opportunity of seeing and conversing with the King. Lord Anglesea saw him yesterday, and this has interfered already in our proposed military reductions.' Nothing could exceed the Duke's indignation and abuse of Lady Conyngham," who had sought her present situation for twenty years, and whose whole and sole object had been patronage; she mingled in everything she could, and it was owing to a few interferences on the Government's part that her animosity to the Government proceeded and this consequent difficulty with the King. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 176, July 7, 1821.)

A remarkable letter from the Duke of Wellington to Lord Liverpool of October 26, 1821, reveals the difficulty of the situation. The Duke, personally in favour of Canning's inclusion in the Cabinet, urged the Prime Minister to press it on the reluctant monarch, but not to the point of resigning in case of failure. It was not a matter for the Government to break with the King over, and so letting in the Whigs. The Duke told Lord Liverpool that the King had never forgiven him for the Sumner incident, and that the King's real objection to Canning lay in the fact of Liverpool's wishing for him. What they had to choose between was: bearing with the "many inconveniences and evils resulting from the King's habits and character, which none of your predecessors ever bore," and giving way to the Whigs and Radicals, to the country's "irretrievable ruin." (*Supplementary Despatches*, i. 192–4.) Nothing, however, came of the matter, nor was it till the following year that Canning's chance came, when Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh) committed suicide on

August 11, 1822, after a ten years' tenure of the Foreign Office and the leadership of the Commons.

But "the King's repugnance of Canning's coming into office was extreme," wrote Greville, "and it required all the efforts of the Ministers to surmount it. The Duke of Wellington and Peel have all the credit of having persuaded the King to consent," though Greville thought that Lord Bathurst had most to do with it. (i. 55.)

Lord Colchester says that it was Lord Liverpool who forced Canning on the King, thus sacrificing the principle of a purely Protestant Ministry. (iii. 256, September 5, 1822.) But in any case it was the Duke who prevailed on the King, for so the King himself told the third Lord Londonderry at their interview on April 12, 1827. (Wellington, *ib.* iii. 632–5.) The Duke was ill at the time, and the matter had to be settled by correspondence. In reply to the proposal the King wrote on September 5: "If I could get over that which is so intimately connected with my private honour, all might be well, but how, my friend, is that to be effected?" Two days later the Duke wrote back, pressing Canning's claims and deprecating the resignation of Lord Chancellor Eldon as a consequence. What did it matter if Canning did differ from the King's other servants about the criminal law or the Catholic question? And as to the most important point—His Majesty's feelings—and the point of honour, the honour of His Majesty consisted in acts of mercy and grace, and it was most safe in extending his grace and favour to Mr. Canning, in view of the benefit to His Majesty's service. (*ib.* i. 273–6.) These arguments convinced the King, and on September 13 Canning received the seals of office, thus becoming Foreign Minister and the leader of the House of Commons.

These simple facts must have been the foundation for the mythical story told to Sir H. Bulwer Lytton by an intimate friend of both the King and the Duke, and repeated by him in his *Historical Characters* (ii. 334.) As the Duke was ill at Stratfieldsaye, and could not have been at Windsor, the story has no merit except as illustrating the idea of the time concerning the King and the Duke. "Good God, Arthur," said the King, "you don't mean to propose that fellow to

me as Secretary of Foreign Affairs! It is impossible. I said on my honour as a gentleman he should never be one of my Ministers again. You hear, Arthur, on my honour as a gentleman. I am sure you will agree with me. I can't do what I said on my honour as a gentleman I would not do." "Pardon me, sir, I don't agree with you at all," said the Duke. "Your Majesty is not a gentleman." The King started. "Your Majesty, I say, is not a gentleman, but the Sovereign of England, with duties to your people far above any to yourself; and these duties render it imperative that you should at this time employ the abilities of Mr. Canning." "Well," drawing a long breath, "if I must, I must," was finally the King's reply.

So ended in Canning's favour what the Lord Chancellor described as a week of great distress to the King, and, as Fremantle wrote, a most bitter pill it was for him to swallow. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 374.)

But for some time relations between the King and Canning were not of the best. The Duke declared that during the years they were colleagues he had had to reconcile the King to his Foreign Minister forty times. (*Colchester*, iii. 502.) And on May 8, 1824, the King complained to Lord Liverpool of Canning's having attended a dinner given by Waithman, the Radical Lord Mayor of London, as a personal affront to himself, and it ended in Canning's having to apologise. In the political field, Canning's recognition of the Spanish-American republics met with the strongest opposition from the King. At one time the King became so offended at Canning's influence, especially over Lord Liverpool, that he got Arbuthnot to tell the latter that he could not endure to see Canning make a puppet of him, and that he would rather see Canning Prime Minister at once than that he should have all the power without the name of governing him; that unless Lord Liverpool could shake him off, he would not let him remain at the head of the Government; that he must find some means of getting rid of Canning. When Arbuthnot wrote in this sense to Lord Liverpool, the latter answered in terms of natural indignation, that the King had better take care what he was about or he would run the risk of making the end of his reign as dis-

astrous as the beginning had been prosperous. (*Greville*, ii. 175.)

On such terms the unpopular Liverpool Ministry struggled on till February 17, 1827, when a sudden attack of paralysis compelled the Premier's retirement. The Duke of Wellington told Lord Colchester that at that time Lord Liverpool seemed never more firmly fixed in his position, though never more "despised and detested" by the King. (*Colchester*, iii. 502.)

Then followed several more weeks of doubt and intrigue, during which the King found it difficult to steer between the rival claims to the vacant post. At separate interviews with the Duke of Wellington, with Peel, and with Canning, he appears to have told each to try to agree with the others, and he would appoint whichever of them they decided upon. The Duke declined to advise him as to the choice; that must rest with him. "It was the only personal act the King of England had to perform." To leave it to them to elect among themselves was "surrendering the Royal prerogative." (*ib.* iii. 501.) The Ultra Tories moved heaven and earth to prevent Canning's being appointed. The Duke of Newcastle had a special interview with the King, at which he conversed with him in what the King described to Lord Londonderry as "a very unbecoming manner." He threatened His Majesty with the withdrawal of his support and of that of other noble peers, leaving the King to think that there was a wish to force Wellington upon him.

For some time the King could come to no conclusion, though expressing in no measured terms his detestation of Liberalism, and especially of Catholic Emancipation. He behaved in such a way that all his Ministers were "disgusted with his doubting, wavering, uncertain conduct, so weak in action, so intemperate in language." (*Greville*, i. 95.) But allowance must be made for the situation. On March 28 Canning told the King plainly that he would not co-operate with an anti-Catholic peer as head of the Government; that "the substantive power of Prime Minister he must have, and, what was more, must be known to have," or nothing. (Stapleton's *Canning*, iii. 315.) On the other hand, Peel, who was fated two years later to carry Catholic

Relief, told the King he could not continue in any Government of which the head supported that measure. The King in reply suggested that he should continue under a secret pledge and promise from himself that it should not be carried, and on Peel's refusal dismissed him with resentment as doubting the Royal word. (*Greville*, i. 115.)

On April 10 Canning took a still bolder line with the King, telling him that further delay was impossible; that he must make up his mind. The story which Canning told Lord Melbourne was that, when the King asked him how he could get sufficient support to carry on the Government, Canning, showing him a letter from Brougham offering his support, said: "Sir, Your father broke the domination of the Whigs; I hope Your Majesty will not endure that of the Tories." "No, I'll be damned if I do," said the King, and thereupon made him Minister. (*ib.* iii. 141.) Another story was that Canning "drove the King into a corner, with his watch in his hand. 'Your Majesty must decide in half an hour; for, if I am to be Prime Minister, my writ must be moved for within that time.' The King then gave him his hand to kiss." (Colchester's *Diary*, iii. 501.)

Such was the state of chaos that followed Canning's appointment that on April 12 six members of the Liverpool Government, including Peel, Lord Eldon, and the Duke of Wellington, resigned rather than continue under Canning, nine members of the Government outside the Cabinet following their example. (*Canning Correspondence*, ii. 295.) Of the former Lord Eldon had only stayed in the Government, as the King told Lord Londonderry, after Canning's appointment as Foreign Secretary in 1822 "against the grain at my positive entreaty." "The real reason," says Greville, "why so many of Canning's colleagues refused to serve under him in 1827 was that they had a bad opinion of him and would not trust him. They knew of his intriguing, underhand practices," and, though they would have served with him, they would not serve under him. (v. 407.)

Of those who resigned the most conspicuous was the Duke of Wellington, who resigned his place in the Cabinet and his offices of Commander-in-Chief and Master General

of the Ordnance. The letters of Canning on his appointment gave him great offence, especially one which had been shown to the King and therefore amounted to a communication from him, and the Duke could not continue in command "unless he was respected and treated with that fair confidence by His Majesty and his Minister which he thought he deserved; and nobody could consider that he was treated with confidence, respect, or even civility by Mr. Canning in his last letter." Shelley, in a letter to Lord Colchester, spoke of the letter of offence as "so insolent and sarcastic" that the Duke could not but resign, as "the insult was given in the King's name"; and the Duke bade Shelley give this story all the circulation he could. (*Colchester*, iii. 483–5.)

The King committed the indiscretion of informing the Duke of Canning's having said to him, during Lord Liverpool's illness, that if the Tories would not consent to his being Prime Minister, he was sure of the Whigs; and this had greatly offended the Duke. (*Greville*, ii. 172.) The Duke, in short, thought that the whole thing was a scheme to "force" him out of the Government; and it would seem as if he was almost as much hurt by the King's conduct as by Canning's. The quarrel with Canning, for quarrel it was, is all the more to be regretted in that in his letter to Canning of May 6, 1827, he was in the happy position of being able to say that he had never in his life had a quarrel with any man. (Stapleton's *Canning*, iii. 384.) A study of the whole episode, as given in Stapleton's *Canning* (iii. 352–84) or in Wellington's *Supplementary Despatches* (iii. 627), leaves the blame fairly divided between the combatants.

The King was indignant at the Duke's resignation. Lord Londonderry told the Duke that the King was "very sore at his notion of desertion by those who forced Mr. Canning on him originally." (April 13.) And Colonel Trench told the Duke how the King in his long interview with the Archbishop expressed himself "very angrily at the desertion of his friends, and most so of Your Grace." (April 18.) On that date the King was reported as so furious at all the refusals and resignations that he swore he would sooner surrender the Catholic question than depart from Canning. (*Londonderry to Duke*

of Wellington, April 18.) The King was so exceedingly angry with the seceders that he gave the full weight of his support to Canning. (Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 390.) But that did not add to the King's popularity ; as was shown at the Academy Dinner on May 5, when the toast of the Duke was received with great applause, whilst that of the King, " our magnificent patron," met with no applause at all. (Colchester's *Diary*, iii. 494.) The King, unfortunately, never inspired confidence. Lord Lyttleton, in a letter of May 22, could see no danger to Canning's Ministry except from " a certain Personage, whose malevolence to certain of his servants and whose *tête exaltée* upon a particular question keep us in perpetual hot water, and must make his service extremely painful as well as precarious." (Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 403.)

But the King was not alone in his vexation with the Duke. " Friend or foe," wrote Sir C. Bagot to Lord Binning on April 26, 1827, " all blame, and so loudly the Duke's petulant resignation of the Army that, when he has had his sulk out he must, I think, see the immense mistake that he has made and return to his duty." (*ib.* ii. 396.)

The five years that had elapsed since the Duke had pressed Canning into the Cabinet had not improved their relations. They differed on Continental politics and the Catholic question, and rivalry had sprung up between them. The Duke complained to Lord Colchester of Canning's " foolish, insulting and indecent behaviour towards himself " ; was sure that Canning would gladly give half his tenure of office to have him back, and would like to have him as his Commander-in-Chief but for his fear of the consequences of the Duke's seeing the King three times a week. (iii. 502.) But when on May 21 the King wrote to the Duke, renewing the offer of the command of the Army, with an accompanying friendly note by Canning, the Duke refused the next day, and after what Canning described to the King as this " unaccountable refusal " there was no more effort at reconciliation. Nor was it till after Canning's death that the Duke resumed his forsaken office on August 17, 1827.

But in the same period the King's relations with Canning had improved, partly owing to the tact by which the latter had led the King to imagine that he inspired the policy which

he really followed. The King admitted to Lord Londonderry that since 1822 Canning had been considerate to him and behaved well in every respect. And the Duke, in his letter of resignation, admitted that for the last two years Canning had given the King entire satisfaction, though he had himself more than once had to reconcile him to some of Canning's acts and enable him to regain the Royal confidence. (*Supplementary Despatches*, iii. 630, April 12.)

Consequently the new Canning Ministry, half Liberal and half Tory, began with some fair chance of success. But that the King triumphed over all parties is proved by the Cabinet Minute of April 23, 1827, which left the Catholic question an open one, free to every member of it to support or propose, but solely in his individual capacity.

For the Whigs would not join Canning unless the question was taken up by the Cabinet. All they could do was to give him "a very handsome and flattering support," while so many of his own side "flew in his face with slander, vile calumny and vituperation." (*Lord Binning to Sir C. Bagot* in Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 407, July 12, 1827.)

The King played his part between contending factions much as his father had done, but with less natural cleverness. "My father," said the Duke of Clarence to Lord Colchester, "was a thorough John Bull, a very clever man; knew other men well, and could play them off against each other. The present is a different sort of man." (Colchester's *Diary*, iii. 519.) Peel, writing to Lord Colchester, complains of the King for "playing off one-half of the Administration against the other half; receiving recommendations for honours and offices from each party in the Government; and putting aside both that neither might triumph." (*ib.* iii. 527, November 18, 1827.)

When Canning died on August 8, 1827, in consequence, partly, of the terrible persecution by his own party, the King was thought to have behaved "like a thoroughbred gentleman." He sent for Canning's two chief friends, Lord Goderich and Sturges Bourne, pressing on the latter, as Canning's oldest friend, the choice of the Colonial Office or the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. He made Canning's widow a peeress. But Huskisson, as Canning's representative, plainly

told him that neither himself nor any other friend of Canning would continue to serve him, if he tried to strengthen the Government by an infusion of any of Canning's enemies; and with this view the King had the good sense to express his sympathy. (Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 422–6.)

Lord Goderich then entered on his short spell of power. The country was again disappointed by finding itself in the hands of another mixed or divided Cabinet, such as the King and his father before him loved; seven of its members being friendly to Catholic Relief, and six opposed to it. Lord Redesdale's opinion was that the King had led himself into all this political entanglement "by being himself an intrigant." He thought the King fancied he had acted with great dexterity under the guidance of Lady Conyngham and Sir W. Knighton, two intrigants who were looking only to themselves. (Colchester's *Diary*, iii. 538, 539.)

To steal a march over his Ministers in the great State-lever of the disposal of patronage was a constant object with George IV. And for this the weak Government of Lord Goderich afforded him ample scope. "The King," writes Greville, "is grasping at power and patronage and wants to take advantage of the weakness of the Government and their apparent dependence on him to exercise all the authority which ought to belong to his Ministers." (i. 112.)

The nomination of Herries as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and of the Duke of Portland as President of the Council, without consulting his Ministers, provoked the Whigs to the strongest indignation. It was, too, without any consultation with Ministers that the King and the Duke of Clarence made promotions and dispensed honours after the battle of Navarino; and in the same way Sumner was made Bishop of Winchester. "The peremptory manner in which the King claimed the disposal of every sort of patronage," his "assumption of all power in disposing" of it, seems to have been among the causes of the resignation of Lord Goderich's Government after the short life of only four months in January 1828. (*Greville*, i. 117.)

On January 9, 1828, the Duke of Wellington was called to the helm, and with Peel for Home Secretary his Cabinet was

complete by the end of that month. The Tories were again in power.

From the foregoing story it may be judged how tangled a web was the government of this country under George IV. The jealousies and rivalries of parties and individuals must bear their fair share of the responsibility for the confusion, and these would have been just the same under a Republic as under a Monarchy. But a monarch, unlike a president, offers an opposition which may be for life, not for a period, to politicians he dislikes, and his obstinacy against any particular measure, like that of George IV. and his father to Catholic Emancipation, may prove, as in their case, an endless source of friction and discord. George IV. once expressed to the French Minister his unalterable conviction that "for the welfare of mankind we ought not to wish any other people to have our institutions. What does pretty well for us would be worthless elsewhere." Even he only put it at "pretty well." Nor must the verdict of the Duke of Wellington be forgotten: "Between the King and his brothers the Government of this country has become a most heartrending concern. Nobody can ever know where he stands upon any subject."

CHAPTER III

The Nadir of Monarchy

If history teaches one lesson more conclusively than another, it is that monarchical power is often more than the human brain can stand. During the greater part of the reign of George III. the liability to insanity in the monarch added enormously to the difficulties of our statesmen and to the dangers of the State. Even before the worst attack, which lasted through the winter of 1788 to the following February, the King had shown symptoms of mental derangement both at the time of the riots of 1780 and at the close of Lord North's Ministry in 1782. "When constrained to business," writes Lord Holland, "he was clear and decisive; but he often betrayed the narrowest prejudices on things, and that constitutional suspicion of mankind which is so frequent a concomitant of a disordered understanding." (*Further Whig Memoirs*, 58.) One of his worst attacks followed Pitt's resignation in 1801; his incapacity necessitated a delay of some weeks in the appointment of new Ministers. Lord Sidmouth declared that his chief reason for resigning the Premiership in 1804 was the trouble about the King's health; and consideration for the King's "ease of mind" frustrated every chance of that emancipation of the Catholics which might have made the Union with Ireland a success and averted discord from a whole generation.

The cloud settled down permanently on the unfortunate King in 1810, and exposed the country for a decade to all the disadvantages of a Regency. The memory of the Regency is associated so much with the scandal of the Regent's unhappy wife that even the military glory of Waterloo did but little to redeem the period from the character of being one of the most deplorable in our annals. The splendour of our victories abroad, said Lord Holland,

failed as signally to win the applause of the vulgar as the approbation of the wise (*ib.* 158), and in his opinion Queen Caroline was "always in a state bordering on insanity, and sometimes actually insane." (*ib.* 178.)

Nor was her husband free from suspicion of the same misfortune.

"From various instances of eccentricities," writes Greville, "I am persuaded that the King is subject to occasional impressions which produce effects like insanity; that, if they continue to increase, he will end by being decidedly mad." (i. 75, November 29, 1823.) This was when the Catholic question was disturbing men's minds. But it is difficult to reconcile this evidence with the Duke of Wellington's opinion that the King did not care a farthing about the Catholic question (*ib.* i. 103); and even Greville himself asserts that the King cared more about horse-racing than about the welfare of Ireland or the peace of Europe. (*ib.* i. 144.)

Unfortunately the personal popularity of the old King passed to none of his sons. Of George III., Sir Samuel Romilly doubted "whether the history of mankind could furnish an example of a good man seated on a throne who in the course of a long reign had done less for the happiness of any portion of his subjects." (*Memoirs*, ii. 302.) And he thought his popularity would seem very unaccountable to posterity. Till the end of the American War (1782) George had been one of the most unpopular Kings we ever had; but since that time he had been one of the most popular, though in nothing had his character changed. The change was due primarily to his taking the popular side in opposition to the Coalition between Fox and Lord North; and sympathy for him was enhanced by the madwoman's attempt on his life in 1786; by the dissolute life of the Prince of Wales; by his malady in 1788; and still more by the horrors of the French Revolution. (*ib.* ii. 305.)

But some deductions must be made from this estimate, if certain incidents are any index to public opinion. When Parliament met, for instance, on October 29, 1797, George III. "was scandalously insulted on his way to the House of Lords, and as he arrived within a few yards of Henry VII.'s

Chapel, one of his coach glasses was pierced by a stone or bullet." An immense mob shouted, "No war," "Down with tyrants," "No King," and stones and dirt were thrown in great quantities at the state carriage both in going and returning. Lord Westmoreland and Lord Onslow were with the King, and were much agitated. But the King lost neither his courage nor his humour; for, presenting Lord Onslow with a stone that had lodged in his sleeve, he bade him keep it as a memento of the civilities they had received. And he read his speech "with extraordinary firmness and spirit." (Colchester's *Diary*, i. 2.) On June 15, 1800, the King was shot at in the morning at a review of the Grenadiers, and the same evening he was fired at as he entered Drury Lane Theatre by a man in the pit (*ib.* i. 204): a record, surely, for one day.

But little of the popularity of the old King fell to the lot of the Regent. His dissolute character; his betrayal of Liberalism; his relations with his wife; all brought the monarchy into a state of disrepute of which in these happier times it is difficult to form a conception. In December 1815 we are told that "the Regent is more unpopular than ever; and on a late occasion, when His Royal Highness went to church (to receive the Sacrament) he was hissed and groaned at both going and coming. He was afraid of going in state through the streets as he should have done, but went in his private carriage through the park. But the mob found him out, and clung to the carriage wheels, hissing . . . and the church—the Chapel Royal—was surrounded by soldiers." (Bury's *Court under George IV.*, ii. 67.) The Regent shared with Lord Yarmouth, of whose debauched life as Lord Hertford Greville has left so striking a picture (v. 92–4), the aversion of the mob, and could appear nowhere without being hissed. (*ib.* ii. 77.) Again, "The Prince Regent left town last night (January 2, 1816). He has been so much hissed by the mob, he is quite disgusted; and the old Queen also in going to her last Drawing-room was hissed and reviled, and the people asked her what she had done with the Princess Charlotte. They stopped her chair, and she put down the glass, and said, 'I am seventy-two years of age; I have been fifty-two years Queen of England, and I never was

hissed by a mob before.' So they let her pass. And when the Regent sent several aides-de-camp to see her safely to Buckingham Palace, she said to them, 'You left Carlton House at his orders ; return there at mine, or I will leave my chair and go home on foot.'" (*ib.* ii. 100.)

On January 28, 1817, the Regent on his way back from opening Parliament in the House of Lords was attacked in his carriage between Carlton House and St. James's. (*Colchester*, iii. 600.) But when on February 6, 1821, he visited Drury Lane, in company with his brothers of York and Clarence, he was received, much to his satisfaction, "with immense acclamations, the whole pit standing up, hurrahing, and waving their hats." (*Greville*, i. 44.)

Public affairs were never at a lower ebb than when on the death of George III. on January 29, 1820, the Regent stepped into his father's shoes as George IV. Discontent was universal in the lower classes, and so far sympathised with by the higher, that Lord Fitzwilliam was removed from the Lord-Lieutenancy of Yorkshire for siding with the rioters at Manchester. (*Marquis of Wellesley to the Marquis of Buckingham*, October 22, 1819, Buckingham's *Regency*, ii. 356.)

In November 1819 so imminent had seemed an insurrection in the North that troops with cannon had been sent to Cheshire, Yorkshire, and Lancashire, and the same symptoms appeared in Cornwall.

Lord Redesdale wrote on January 4, 1820, that there was "a very bad spirit abroad" ; he doubted whether it would not be "more fortunate for the country if half Manchester had been burned, and Glasgow had escaped with a little singeing." (*Colchester*, iii. 109.)

In April 1820 risings seemed imminent about Leeds and Huddersfield, and in Scotland an action took place between a small party of Radicals and the soldiers. Nor, considering that in those days Glasgow weavers only earned 2s. 7d. a week for working from 14 to 16 hours a day (Buckingham's *Regency*, ii. 372), does the discontent seem unintelligible.

But those symptoms were nothing compared to the famous Cato Street Conspiracy of February 1820 ; a conspiracy actually to assassinate the entire Cabinet at a forthcoming dinner at Lord Harrowby's in Grosvenor Square on February

23, and to get London into the hands of an armed mob. Timely information defeated the plot, and the Cabinet dined at Fife House instead of in Grosvenor Square. In the capture of Thistlewood's gang, one constable was killed, several were wounded, and nine conspirators captured, of whom five came to the gallows in May. (*Croker*, i. 162, 163.) But the fact that Thistlewood and men like him had for years plotted such things, and had thought it a possible task to capture the banks, burn public buildings, seize the Tower, and overturn the Government, seems to indicate a reliance on the forces of anarchy which is only explicable on the belief in a widespread disaffection to the Government.

In June 1820 "the principal Ministers went in daily danger of their lives. Lord Sidmouth never drove out without a case of loaded pistols on the seat of the carriage ready for instant use." (Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 44.) If a Minister was recognised in the streets, he would be greeted with groans and hisses, and sometimes with more formidable missiles.

So universal was the spirit of discontent that it even found expression in the Army. There were strong symptoms of mutiny in one battalion of the Third Guards. (*Colchester*, iii. 143.) And on July 7, Bankes wrote: "The spirit of discontent and disaffection is very widely prevalent, and above all some symptoms of the same feeling have been observed in the military." (*ib.* iii. 165.)

Sympathy with Queen Caroline in the impending trial for her divorce intensified the unpopularity of the Government; for as Lord Lyttleton wrote—on August 8, 1820—"not only the mob, but people of all ranks, and the middle classes almost to a man, and I believe the troops too, side with the Queen." When the Bill of Pains and Penalties against her was withdrawn, "the town was literally drunk with joy at this unparalleled triumph of the Queen" (*Creevey*, i. 323, October 9, 1820); and "a delirium of joy" passed all over the country, especially in the large towns. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 84.) It is symptomatic of the anarchy of the time that in 1821, near London, stage coaches were "stopped and robbed by large numbers of bandits." (*Colchester*, iii. 237.)

No wonder that on the Continent we were thought to be on the eve of a revolution. Many thought the same in the country itself. "A soldier less and we shall have revolution and civil war," wrote Lord Cassilis in December 1820. And on July 4, 1821, Fremantle wrote of the "danger of the revolution which is fast approaching, and which daily threatens us more and more." (Buckingham's *George IV.*, ii. 74.)

The failure of the unhappy Queen Caroline to obtain admission to Westminster Abbey at the Coronation on July 19, 1821, so told on her health that she died on August 7, 1821, and on August 12 the King and his party landed in Ireland, according to Fremantle, "in the last stage of intoxication." (*ib.* i. 194.)

Creevey also asserts that when the King landed in Ireland he was "dead drunk"; "they drank all the wine on board the steamboat, and then applied to the whiskey punch till they could hardly stand." (ii. 30.) Although therefore he had a magnificent reception in Ireland, one can understand the "great unpopularity" which Fremantle notices as attaching to him on September 16, 1821. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, i. 199.) Nevertheless he grew somewhat in popular favour after the Queen's death, though this he tended to lose again in 1823, when he took to removing himself "as much as possible from the popular gaze," and shut the public out from the terrace and public walks at Windsor. (*ib.* i. 481, 483.)

George IV. owed much to Sir William Knighton, first his physician, and then the Keeper of his Privy Purse. There was strong mutual attachment between them, as is shown by their letters. The King writes to Knighton on August 10, 1821, "It is utterly impossible for me to tell you how uncomfortable and miserable I always feel when I have not you immediately at my elbow" (Knighton's *Memoirs*, i. 147), and the King's assurances of his affection are frequent. On the other hand, Knighton, writing to his wife, speaks of "the dearest King," "the beloved King." (*ib.* i. 177, 178, October 1821.) And this relationship seems to have continued to the end. On December 27, 1827, Knighton made the King laugh heartily at the anxiety shown by his wife at a supposed quarrel between them; it was a newspaper trick. "His

Majesty and I were never on more happy terms of feeling." (*ib.* i. 377.) And when on June 26, 1830, Knighton had to announce to his wife the King's death, he lamented him as "one of the cleverest and most accomplished men in Europe —full of benevolence." (*ib.* ii. 144.)

It is difficult to reconcile this with Greville's account: that, according to Lord Mount Charles, the King abhorred Knighton with a detestation that could hardly be described; that he would say the most mortifying things of him in the presence of others, and one day, when the door was open, said, so that the pages could hear, "I wish to God somebody would assassinate Knighton." (i. 154, January 12, 1829.) And Lord Mount Charles had good opportunities of knowing.

Greville expressed himself strongly about his King: "A more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog, does not exist than this King, on whom such flattery is constantly lavished." Thinking most kings to be of inferior character, he believed George IV. to be one of the worst of the kind. "There never was such a man, or behaviour so atrocious as his—a mixture of narrow-mindedness, selfishness, truckling, blustering, and duplicity, with no object but self, his own ease, and the gratification of his own fancies and prejudices, without regard to the advice and opinion of the wisest and best-informed men, or to the interests and tranquillity of the country." (*Memoirs*, i. 184, March 2, 1829.) "With vices and weaknesses of the lowest and most contemptible order it would be difficult to find a disposition more abundantly furnished."

These are too well known to need recapitulation. Creevey's account of his social habits at the Brighton Pavilion shows the depths which were reached. Not only would he drink a great quantity of wine at dinner, but he was very fond of making any newcomer drunk by drinking wine with him very frequently, always recommending his strongest wines, and finishing up with some remarkably strong old brandy, appropriately called Diabolino. (i. 50.)

But he had his better side. To his brother, the Duke of Clarence, he was "the best of brothers, masters, and men," endeared to him by an uninterrupted friendship of fifty-nine years. And Sir Walter Scott spoke, when the King had

passed beyond the reach of flattery, of his "gentle and generous disposition," of his "captivating conversation," which rendered him "as much the darling of private society as his heartfelt interest in the general welfare of the country and the constant and steady course of wise measures by which he raised his reign to such a state of triumphal prosperity made him justly delighted in by his subjects." (*Knighton*, ii. 151, July 14, 1830.) Nevertheless the balance of evidence goes to show that, despite his considerable talents and great social gifts, George IV. showed monarchy at its worst. That it should have survived such an ordeal seems almost miraculous, and can perhaps best be accounted for by the fear which French experience had inspired of the alternative political system to monarchy. But the outstanding lesson of his reign is that our system stakes too much on the personal character of the monarch whom the pure chance of heredity places over us.

CHAPTER IV

The Battle of the Catholics

The fiction that the Crown is of no party has somehow survived the direct proof to the contrary afforded by every reign in greater or less degree since 1760. In the case of George IV. it was not only the ultimate Toryism of the monarch, but the constant Toryism of his brothers that loaded the dice against any Liberal policy. Catholic Relief was the burning question of the reign of George IV., and by this the action of the monarchy at that time must be judged. Sir William Fremantle, on July 11, 1824, mentions not only the King as being violently anti-Catholic, but the Duke of York as being "outrageous upon it," and as taking "every opportunity of expressing his resentment and rage." (Buckingham's *George IV.*, ii. 103.)

When in June 1823 Lord Holland brought in a Bill to enable Scroop, though a Catholic, to officiate as Earl Marshal, a Bill which passed its second reading, the Duke of York was "perfectly furious," and wrote to every peer he knew to come and protect the Crown against the insidious Scroop. (*Creevey*, ii. 78.)

Sir Francis Burdett's Relief Bill of 1825 was wrecked by the Duke of York, who, after its passing the House of Commons on second reading on April 21, made a violent speech against it in the Lords on the 24th, to the great indignation of Lord Liverpool, then Prime Minister, and of the Duke of Wellington. This speech was placarded all over the walls of London, and in one place with the addition: "Damn the King! The Duke of York for ever!" (Buckingham's *George IV.*, ii. 238, 241.)

It was printed in letters of gold and circulated throughout the Kingdom. (Liverpool's *Memoirs*, iii. 329.)

Besides this, the Duke of York told Lord Sidmouth at a levée that the King had assured him that he would never consent

to the passing of such a Bill (*Colchester*, iii. 380); a declaration whose judicious circulation, coupled with the speech in letters of gold, ensured the defeat of the measure in the Lords by forty-eight on May 16, though it had passed the Commons by 248 to 227. This of course filled the Catholics with despair (Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 281.)

The Duke of York's influence in the country increased with advancing years. Notwithstanding the grave scandal in connection with Mrs. Clarke and the sale of Army commissions, which was the sensation of the year 1809, and led to the Duke's temporary loss of the Commandership of the Army, he lived to become far more popular than the King ever was. After the Duke's death, early in 1827, Lord Lyttleton, in a letter to Sir Charles Bagot (January 14, 1827), spoke of his extreme popularity; doubted whether one person out of every six would not be ready to run you through if you did not acknowledge his possession of every virtue under heaven; and could only account for "the extraordinary attachment of so many persons of all parties and ranks to him" by the "many peculiarly fine points in his character." (*ib.* ii. 360.) Between two royal brothers so fixedly opposed to concession Catholic Emancipation never seemed further from realisation than within three years of its actual passing.

On November 19, 1824, the King wrote to Peel: "The sentiments of the King upon Catholic Emancipation are those of his revered and excellent father; from these sentiments the King never can and never will deviate." (Peel's *Memoirs*, i. 276.) The agitation in Ireland and the doings of the Catholic Association hardened him in these views, and it was to little purpose that even the pre-Reform Parliament showed itself more liberal. Each of the Parliaments returned by the General Elections of 1807, 1812, 1818, 1820, and 1826 had, with the exception of that of 1818, decided in favour of the Catholic claims, and that of 1818 only negatived them by a majority of two: 243 to 241. (*ib.* i. 288.) And the Commons in 1825 sent a Bill to the Lords for the repeal of Catholic disabilities by a majority of twenty-one.

The Parliament of 1826 showed the same liberal disposition towards the Catholics. But it was still the King

who blocked the way. When in April 1827, after the resignation of Lord Liverpool, Canning was instructed to form a Ministry, the King made it a condition that the Catholic question should not be so much as raised, and Canning declared that on this matter George IV. was even more bigoted than his father had been. (Colchester's *Diary*, iii. 483, 484.) On April 14, 1827, the King gave the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London an audience of six hours, in which he himself talked for five. He told them that when the Talents Administration was formed in 1806 he pledged the Whigs his support solely from regard to Fox, but on the express condition that his father should not be disturbed by the raising of the Catholic question, as his father would never consent to it, nor would he himself, if he came to the throne. (*ib.* iii. 486.) Fox, he said, observed the condition, but when after his death Lord Grenville in 1807 wished to admit the Catholics to Staff appointments, the early intimation that he himself was able to give the King led to the dismissal of the Ministry. He told Lord Castlereagh that the Coronation oath must be altered before, not after he was crowned; otherwise he would rather lay his head on the block than consent to it.

At this historic interview, when the Archbishop asked whether these views were to be treated as confidential, the King bade him tell it to all the bishops and all the world; that he was more immovably fixed on it than his father. A few days later (May 7) he wrote to reproach the Archbishop for not having given enough publicity to his sentiments; forgetting or disregarding the resolution passed by the Commons on December 17, 1783, on the East India Bill that it was a "high crime and misdemeanour, a gross breach of privilege and subversion of the Constitution to report any opinion or pretended opinion of the King respecting any Bill or other proceeding pending in Parliament." On May 21 the Bishop of London told the clergy of his diocese of the King's declaration; whereat Lord Harrowby in the Lords waxed "extremely vehement and passionate," declaring that the Crown could not rest safely on the Royal brow if the King were to make known his opinions on any measure pending or about to depend in Parliament until

both Houses tendered it for the Royal assent. (*ib.* iii. 509.) But the Protestant party cared little for the Constitution, if only they could dish Canning. Lord Howard de Walden, writing to Bagot on April 10, 1827, declared that he "never knew anything like the bitterness of the Ultras against Canning"; they deputed the Duke of Newcastle to let the King know the feeling of the nation, and to insist on his making support of the Catholics a disqualification for the Premiership. (Bagot's *Canning*, ii. 382.) So settled seemed the question that Tierney wrote of the Catholic question as belonging as much to the category of past things as the town of Troy. (*ib.* ii. 387, April 16, 1827.)

But it is often the unlikely that happens in politics, and within a short time of the formation of the Wellington-Peel Ministry in January 1828, Lord John Russell's motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—a question which had slumbered since 1790—was carried against the Government by 237 to 193 on February 26, 1828. Peel thereupon consulted the Archbishop and other prelates, and by judiciously substituting a declaration for an oath on the admission of dissenters to offices secured its passage through the Lords. (Peel's *Memoirs*, i. 68.) But the words in the declaration, "on the true faith of a Christian," still kept the Jews outside the pale of office.

On May 8, 1828, a resolution for a conciliatory settlement of Catholic emancipation was only defeated by six votes: 272 to 266. But what set a spur to legislation was the election of O'Connell for County Clare at the end of June, followed by the unfortunate decision of the Cabinet not to let him, as a Catholic, take his seat. The state of Ireland became so alarming that on August 31, 1828, Lord Anglesey, the Lord-Lieutenant, pressed on Peel the necessity of legislating with decision and promptitude. Otherwise he could not guarantee the peace of Ireland beyond the meeting of Parliament. It was "only by a lucky accident that collision had been twice prevented between the Protestants and the Catholics." (*Ellenborough*, i. 229.) Rebellion seemed imminent. The King, who, on May 19, was described as "very eager on the subject of the Catholics," was described by Lord Aberdeen on October 24 as "more wrong-

headed than ever." On November 24 "no progress had been made with him." On December 24 he was "more hostile than he ever was." (*Ellenborough*, i. 109, 244, 264, 293.)

Both the Duke of Wellington and Peel were convinced that the time had come for concession. When the Wellington Ministry had been formed in January 1828 there had been an understanding that the Catholic question should not be a Government measure, and the year 1829 began without the King's having consented to allow the Cabinet to take up the whole question of Ireland, including the Catholic question. "The chief difficulty was the King," wrote Peel. (*Memoirs*, i. 274.) Early in January 1829 the Duke interviewed the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, and the Bishop of Durham, in the forlorn hope that they might bring their influence to bear on the King in favour of the Government proposal; but their refusal was prompt and decided. The division in the Cabinet was such that only by the Duke's urgent entreaty was Peel restrained from resigning. Not till January 15, 1829, did the King release the Government from the condition of their admission to office, requiring only that he should know and be consulted about the details of their Bill (*Ellenborough*, i. 297–8), but not pledging himself to assent even to the unanimous decision of the Cabinet. (*Peel*, i. 297–8.)

On January 18, 1829, Lord Ellenborough remarks: "It really is like a dream. How beyond hope it is that this question should be taken up by Government in this King's life." (*ib.* i. 305.) But the dream was not yet quite ripe for reality; for the King gave trouble to the end. Parliament was to meet on February 6, and "the consent of the King to the actual proposal of the measures to Parliament, with the sanction of the Crown, had yet to be signified." It is that preliminary veto that really matters, and is always forgotten. The prospect of success was not hopeful, for "the King was hostile, the Church was hostile, a majority probably of the people of Great Britain was hostile to concession." (Peel's *Memoirs*, i. 308.) The King gave a reluctant assent to the speech to be given as his from the throne to Parliament on the subject.

Peel then resigned his seat for Oxford University from

a scruple of conscience, and his bad defeat at a fresh election by Sir Robert Inglis revived the hopes of the forces of resistance. But before vacating his seat, he had time to carry through Parliament the Bill for the suppression in Ireland of the Roman Catholic Association, which passed its third reading on February 17, 1829.

But there was another difficulty. Hardly had the King been brought to the point of a resigned assent than over from abroad, despite all efforts to prevent him, came the King's brother, His Grace of Cumberland, more Tory than the King himself. And he well-nigh succeeded. For on February 26, 1829, Lord Ellenborough writes that the Duke of Wellington reported a "very disagreeable" conversation with the King, with whom the Duke of Cumberland had had a great effect. (i. 361.) The Duke of Wellington also wrote to the King to say that the Government could not continue unless it had the King's support; and to Sir William Knighton to say that, if the Duke of Cumberland thought that he could form a Government, he had better do so and thus end the matter. Then came an interview on February 27 between the King and the Duke, an appalling interview of over five hours, at which His Majesty ended by yielding on all points, even to the extent of desiring that the Duke of Cumberland should leave the country; but it must have been in some ways worse than Waterloo, for the Duke described it as "very painful indeed. The King was in a very agitated state, and even spoke of abdicating. The Duke said it was the more painful in consequence of the very peremptory language he was obliged to hold to him. However, the King was very kind, and kissed him when he left him." (*ib.* i. 368.) No wonder that the Duke is described as having been at a subsequent Cabinet meeting "much exhausted." And no wonder that the Duke wrote later: "If I had known in January 1828 one tittle of what I do now, and of what I discovered in one month after I was in office, I should never have been the King's Minister and should have avoided loads of misery. However, I trust that Almighty God will soon determine that I have been sufficiently punished for my sins, and will relieve me from the unhappy lot which has befallen me." (Fitzgerald, *George IV.*, ii. 427.)

Catholic Emancipation would never have passed in 1829 but for the powerful personal influence which the Duke of Wellington exercised over the mind of the King. Says Greville: "The greatest Ministers had been obliged to bend to the King, or the aristocracy, or the Commons, but he commanded them all." The Duke could address the King in a style which no other Minister durst adopt; could speak with him as an equal; and the King stood completely in awe of him. But it was a difficult task. The King's brother of Cumberland worked him one day into such a state of frenzy that he talked of nothing but Catholic Emancipation with such alarming violence that it took the Duke six hours to restore him to calmness. (*Greville*, i. 184.) It was touch and go that the Duke's Ministry was not dismissed. But Greville consoled himself with the reflection that, though there was nothing too false or base for the King to do if he dared, he was such a coward and stood so much in awe of the Duke that nothing serious was to be apprehended. (i. 183.)

"Nobody knows," said the Duke, "the difficulties I have had with my royal master, and nobody knows him so well as I do, but I am as in a field of battle and I must fight it out in my own way." (*ib.* i. 193.)

Contemporary evidence goes to show that the King was nearly driven mad by the Catholic question. On December 15, 1827, he is described as "quite mad upon the Catholic question." (*ib.* i. 117.) On January 12, 1829, Lady Conyngham's son, Lord Mount Charles, who was always about the King, told Greville that he "verily believed the King would go mad on the Catholic question," so violent was his language. The King declared himself as ready as his father had been to lay his head on the block rather than yield. (*ib.* i. 157.) On March 1 the reports were that the King was "ill, if not mad"; nothing but the removal of the Cumberland brother would restore him to peace. On March 2 a three hours' interview with the King, who ended by kissing him, left the Duke "much exhausted." (*Ellenborough*, i. 373.)

On March 4 the Duke and Peel and the Chancellor were summoned to Windsor for an interview, during which the "King talked for six hours." He talked of the greatest pain

with which he had assented to allowing the Cabinet to offer their collective advice on the question, and the still greater pain with which he realised that he had no option but to comply with it. He asked for further explanations. When Peel replied that it was proposed to repeal the Declaration against Transubstantiation, and to modify the oath of supremacy, the King flared up: "What is this? You surely do not mean to alter the ancient oath of supremacy?" In vain each Minister in turn explained that the new oath would only commit the Roman Catholic to a disclaimer of any temporal, not of any spiritual or ecclesiastical jurisdiction within the realm; that otherwise the relief would amount to nothing. The King declared they had misunderstood one another, that he could not assent, and he accepted their resignation. (*Peel*, i. 343–6.) Peel adds that at parting the King "took leave of us with great composure and great kindness, gave to each of us a salute on each cheek." But Lord Ellenborough tells a different tale. According to him, the Duke said: "He never witnessed a more painful scene. He was so evidently insane. He had taken some brandy and water before he joined them, which he continued to drink during the conference. During six hours they did not speak fifteen minutes. The King objected to every part of the Bill. He would not hear it." The result was that Peel was to declare next day in the Commons that the Relief Bill must be dropped owing to his being no longer Minister. But the same night the King wrote to the Duke to say that he consented to the Bill, though "with infinite pain."

"It is impossible," wrote Lord Ellenborough, Privy Seal, of this incident, "not to feel the most perfect contempt for the King's conduct. We should be justified in declaring we will have no further intercourse with one who has not treated us like a gentleman." And certainly the episode was not one which reflected much glory on the inner working of our monarchy.

But the battle continued to rage all through March, the King on March 9 being described as having been in such a state of excitement that the Ministers feared he would go mad. (*Greville*, i. 191.) On March 1 the Duke had laboured

to keep the King to his concessions and to get the Duke of Cumberland out of the country; but neither would His Grace go nor would the King suffer him to be away from Windsor. (*Colchester*, iii. 602.) Individual peers desired special audiences with the King to persuade him to dissolve Parliament. The idea was even conceived of a joint attack by peers on the King, though no such addresses are constitutionally presentable at levées, nor except by single peers at any time. There was also an idea of Lord Winchelsea's marching down to Windsor at the head of 25,000 men. (*Greville*, i. 188.) The Duke of Newcastle did effect an audience, at which he urged the King to make known his sentiments before the matter reached the Lords, so that Peers voting for the measure might not be misled by ignorance of his wishes; the very plan that George III. had employed against the East India Bill. (*Colchester*, iii. 607.) The Duke of Wellington had to warn the King that if he allowed Peers to present addresses to him at private audiences, they virtually usurped the functions of the Secretary of State. And if the King had not refused to receive a petition against the Bill at the hands of his brother of Cumberland, instead of through Peel, the responsible Minister, the Government intended to resign. On March 27 the King told Lord Mansfield that he would refuse his consent to the Bill if it was only carried by five in the Lords; and there was an ominous interview of four hours between the King and Lord Eldon which portended a change of Government. "Really," commented Lord Ellenborough, "the King's conduct is most dishonourable towards the Government."

But the Bill got carried at last—by 320 to 142 in the Commons on March 29, 1829, and by 213 to 109 in the Lords on April 10; it received the Royal assent on April 13. And thus, after this prodigious battle, a measure well calculated to confer happiness on Ireland and to add strength to the Empire found its place in the Statute Book. Lord Grenville, writing to Lord Buckingham on April 14, 1829, was able to congratulate himself that he had not lived in vain. (Buckingham's *George IV.*, ii. 394.) That the measure had not passed thirty years before was due mainly to the prejudices of two monarchs of very limited capacity, on whom the Constitu-

tion had conferred powers far in excess of their personal deserts.

The measure failed of its pacifying effect owing to the unfortunate decision of the Cabinet not to suffer O'Connell to take his seat for County Clare, but the provision in the Bill that made a second election necessary before he could do so was a concession to the personal feelings of the King. It would also have reconciled Irish opinion to the disfranchisement of the Forty-shilling Freeholders which accompanied emancipation, had their great leader not been treated in a manner which deprived the Act of half the grace of the political concession.

But the Duke of Wellington's troubles did not end with the passing of the Catholic Relief Bill; for behind the Minister stood the Royal brother, the secret Minister intriguing against the avowed one. So strong was the Duke of Cumberland's hope of prevailing on the King to dismiss his Ministers and to form a Ministry created by himself that he decided to continue to reside in the country. (*Greville*, i. 225.) He swore that he would not leave the country till he had turned out the Ministry. (May 1, 1829, *Ellenborough*, ii. 28.) Lord Ellenborough says that the King hated his brother and even wished his death, but that he crouched to him; the King, "our master, being the weakest man in England." (*ib.* ii. 47.)

The Duke of Cumberland did all he could to set the King against his Prime Minister, whom he used to speak of in mockery as King Arthur. (*ib.* i. 227.) All the Whigs shared the hatred of this King, whose alliance with them in his youth had so embittered the life of his father; but his hatred extended, says Greville, to the best men of all parties. He liked none but such as were subservient to himself, nor did one great object connected with the national glory or prosperity ever enter his brain. (*ib.* i. 219.)

The King nursed his defeat. On May 14, 1829, he turned his back at a levée on the Bishops who had voted for the Bill. (*Greville*, i. 210.) He was exceedingly angry with the Duke of Wellington for attending a dinner, "very fine and very dull," given in his honour on May 17 by the Duke of Norfolk, and he openly avowed his intention of getting rid of his Ministers; the Duke had to defend his right to dine

with whomsoever he liked, and to invite whom he liked. (*Ellenborough*, ii. 37–9.)

The position was well-nigh impossible. By September 24 the Duke had given up the King as "a bad job"; saw him very seldom, because what he did one day he undid the next. The Duke was in despair; for the King had no constancy; there was no depending on him from one day to another. (*ib.* ii. 100.) "Nothing," writes Lord Ellenborough on January 2, 1830, "can have been more scandalous than the King's conduct to the Duke. He has never given his Government the fair support. Say what the Duke will, he of Cumberland is believed." (*ib.* ii. 165.)

And such as the monarch was, such was his Court. "A more despicable scene cannot be exhibited than that which our Court presents; every base, low, and unmanly propensity with selfishness, avarice." (*Greville*, i. 212.) In the reigns of both George IV. and his father Court functions were habitually used for political pressure. As the King at a levée turned his back on the Bishops who had voted for the Catholic Relief Bill, so, when O'Connell passed him, he said in a loud aside: "Damn the fellow! What does he come here for?" (*ib.* i. 210, May 14, 1829.) For the forbidden verb he had a singular fondness. When told that Watson was waiting in the ante-room to see him about something, he exclaimed: "Damn Watson! Let him wait!" (*ib.* i. 158); doubtless a reasonable feeling about Watson. At another time he said he would be damned if Lord Ellenborough should ever dine in his house. (*ib.* i. 193.) But his Court was a dull one, despite this lively language. "Nothing could be more insupportable than to live at this Court," remarked Greville. "The dulness must be excessive, and the people who compose his habitual society are the most insipid and uninteresting that can be found." Lady Conyngham looked bored to death and never spoke, though the King talked without ceasing. (*ib.* i. 101, June 17, 1829.)

Yet Lord Ellenborough was as much impressed by the King's character as the Duke of Wellington was by his courage. The King died on June 26, 1830, but on the night of June 8, in talk with Sir W. Knighton, he was "as amusing as ever"; "in constitution and in mind certainly a wonderful

man." (*Memoirs*, ii. 266.) Nevertheless, his death was "one of the fortunate events which saved the Duke of Wellington." Lord Ellenborough did not know how the Ministry could have got on, had the King lived two months more. The Duke of Cumberland would certainly have triumphed, and it is possible that, as he destroyed the Constitution of Hanover when he became its King, so he might have dealt with the British Constitution. It was a kindly dispensation of fortune that saved us from the Duke of Cumberland as Prime Minister or as King. The Princess Victoria's immediate successor, the man "with the mustaches," as the King of the Belgians described him, was indeed enough, as he said, to frighten the Liberal Government then in power in England into "the most fervent attachment" for the coming Queen. (*Queen's Letters*, i. 93, June 17, 1837.)

REIGN III: WILLIAM IV

CHAPTER I

The Battle of Reform

When William IV. succeeded his brother, he did a most popular thing: he dismissed all his late brother's French cooks. He would have no foreigners about him. (Ellenborough's *Diary*, ii. 299.) He was consistently a strong Gallophobe. Greville tells how once at a dinner given to a regiment at Windsor, the King said: "Whether at peace or at war with France, I shall always consider her as our natural enemy." On which Greville commented: "If he was not such an ass that nobody does anything but laugh at what he says, this would be very important." (iii. 34, September 10, 1833.)

Two years before his accession the Duke of Clarence had struck the world as strikingly eccentric. Writing on July 16, 1828, Lord Ellenborough says: "The idea is that the Duke of Clarence is rather mad"; on August 8, "he is now and then rather mad"; "there are all sorts of stories of the Lord High Admiral, and the world says he is mad." (*ib.* i. 165, 193, 201.)

The King was fond of making speeches, which were a terror to all who heard them. On one occasion, when he addressed a deputation from Cambridge on the Catholic question, Lord Ellenborough "covered his face," and the Duke of Wellington would beat a retreat when His Majesty began to speak. (*ib.* ii. 319.) At a great dinner at St. James's, "after dinner the King made a speech which made his Ministers' hearts fail within them" (*ib.* ii. 324); and a few days later his speeches "alarmed and pained" his guests, though he did less mischief than Lord Ellenborough expected,

and "as all the people present were his friends, he only let down the dignity of the Crown." (*Diary*, ii. 33.)

But in spite of these drawbacks the King soon rose to the position of his new and undesired dignity; nor can any one read his correspondence with Lord Grey during the years of the Reform Ministry (1831–32) without a much enhanced opinion both of the character and capacity of the King. Although his letters were, in the main, the composition of his secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, the spirit revealed in them of constant tact and courtesy is that of the King, for whom it is clear that his Minister felt much real affection.

In fairness, this must be set against Greville's account, who sums up William's reign as follows:—"William IV. was a man who, coming to the throne at the mature age of sixty-five, was so excited by the exaltation that he nearly went mad, and distinguished himself by a thousand extravagances of language and conduct, to the alarm or amusement of all who witnessed the strange freaks; and though he was shortly afterwards sobered down into more becoming habits, he always continued to be something of a blackguard and something more of a buffoon. It is but fair to his memory, at the same time, to say that he was a good-natured, kind-hearted, and well-meaning man, and he always acted an honourable and straightforward, if not always a sound and discreet, part." (*Memoirs*, iii. 418.)

His lot fell on a time of extraordinary political difficulty, as was not forgotten by the Duke of Wellington, who said of him in the House of Lords the day after his death that "probably there never was a sovereign who . . . encompassed by so many difficulties more successfully met them than he did upon every occasion on which he had to engage them," and he spoke of his kindness, condescension, and favour towards himself as beyond his power to forget so long as he lived. (*Maxims, etc.*, 384.)

William's short reign of seven years (1830–37) is from the constitutional point of view the most interesting of all in our history. It was really one long crisis, with imminent possibilities of revolution in England and of rebellion in Ireland. Both were happily averted by the unfailing nerve and tact shown by Lord Grey over the Reform Bill; and

Creevey's observation is no overstatement that this difficult measure was "carried exclusively by him, for without his character and talents no man or men could have done or even attempted it; nor would any sovereign have trusted any other man to do it." (ii. 293.)

But the King also is entitled to his share of praise in the matter; for had he not in the main supported his Minister, despite his own personal opinions, the worst might have happened. Finding the Duke of Wellington in office at his accession in June 1830, he deplored the downfall of his Government on November 16. It seemed so unnecessary for the Duke, on the first night of the session (November 8), just after the King's speech, to have delivered that "famous philippic against Reform which sealed his fate." The effect was greater than anything Greville had seen; it destroyed what little popularity the Duke had left. (*Greville*, ii. 55.) Nothing could exceed the consequent excitement and terror. The Government thought it safer to postpone the King's visit to the City, and so great a riot was expected on November 9, that special troops were called up to London, and the Duke expected an attack on Apsley House. So his defeat on the Civil List on November 15, by 233 to 204, brought his Ministry to a close, and the King, though he received his fallen Ministers with the greatest kindness, and even shed tears, accepted their resignation without remonstrance. (*ib.* ii. 64.) Yet every one of them, except the Duke, in taking leave of the King, acknowledged to him that some Reform was necessary. (*Correspondence of Lord Grey with William IV.*, i. 186.)

On November 17 the King received Lord Grey with every possible kindness, giving him *carte blanche* to form a new administration, and placing even the Royal Household, much to its disgust, at the Minister's disposal. Greville highly commends the King for his perfect behaviour on the occasion, with no intriguing or underhand communication with any one. "He turns out an incomparable King and deserves all the encomiums that are lavished on him." (*ib.* ii. 65.)

But the condition of the country was never worse; every post bringing fresh accounts of rick-burnings, destruction of

machinery, associations of labourers ; whilst Ireland was in a worse state than before Catholic Emancipation, thanks to George IV.'s ill-advised action against O'Connell's taking his seat ; which had driven him by way of revenge to agitation against the Union itself. " What a state of terror and alarm we are in," writes Greville on January 25, 1831. When the King returned from the play on February 22, he was " hooted and pelted," and a stone, shivering a window of his coach, fell on the Duke of Cumberland's lap. (*ib.* ii. 120.) Sir W. Napier thought a revolution inevitable, and Greville reflected that if the King died and the Duke of Cumberland succeeded, " that would be a good moment for dispensing with the Royal office." It was little more than six months since the French Revolution of July 1830 had ended in the abdication of Charles X., and the infection seemed to be in the air. And the King lived, for the most part, at Brighton, " a strange life, with tag-rag and bobtail about him." (*ib.* ii. 109.)

But he had the firmest determination not to abate one jot or tittle of his rights as monarch. When Lord Holland, on receiving from him the seals of the Duchy of Lancaster, made some remark which he misinterpreted as meaning some interference by Parliament with his rights over the Duchy, he wrote in consternation to Lord Grey, deprecating any act which should create the impression that he was " disposed tamely to submit to invasions of his just rights," or which would " lower and degrade him into the state and condition of absolute and entire dependence, as a pensioner of the House of Commons." His relief was great on receiving Lord Grey's assurance that nothing of the sort was intended. (*Correspondence*, i. 9–14.) And the inability of the Cabinet, owing to the opposition of one of its members, to propose to Parliament a grant of £25,000 for the outfit of the Queen, showed the strength of the current that was flowing against the monarchy. The philosophy with which both the King and Queen accepted their disappointment afforded some relief to Lord Grey's annoyance.

This enhances the merit of the King in bowing to the necessity of reform. His letters show how he disliked the stirring of this " perilous question," and how gladly

he would have deferred it, though "anxious not to embarrass Lord Grey by objections which could be considered frivolous or captious." All he bargained for was that reform should be divested, as far as possible, "of all that was calculated to deprive the Monarchy of its legitimate rights and attributes, in its immediate or progressive operation." But he deprecated the shortening of Parliaments or any increase of members. He hoped that such sentiments were neither unconstitutional nor arbitrary, nor indicative of any "obstinate adherence to prejudices which would be ill-suited to the times." (January 16, 1831, *ib.* i. 67, 68.)

But it was over the details of a Reform Bill rather than over its principle that difficulty was likely to come. And come it soon did. The King's personality made a vast difference in the ultimate Bill. In the Durham Preliminary Report, on which the Reform Bill was founded, the shortening of Parliaments to five years and election by Ballot were among the recommendations. In deference to the King's objection, Lord Grey withdrew the former as a point of "comparatively inferior importance." (January 17, 1831.) He also cut out the Ballot before submitting the Report to the King. That, said the King, removed an insuperable bar from his ultimate assent to the Bill; for "nothing should ever induce him to yield to the Ballot," a practice which "would abolish the influence of fear and shame and would be inconsistent with the manly spirit and free avowal of opinion which distinguished the people of England." In further examination of the Report he proceeded to criticise its proposals in a spirit of reluctant assent to any Reform at all; the evils of the actual system, he argued, existed more in theory than in practice, nor were public meetings a just criterion of the real sentiments of the people. Whoever reads his long letter of February 4, 1831, will be dispossessed for ever of the idea that the monarch's opinions go for nothing in the framing of legislation. The whole later history of England might have been different had William IV. not put his veto on the Ballot when the Bill was still in embryo.

Lord Grey's account of the proposal of the Ballot in the Report was that it was not a measure to which the framers of the Report (Lord Durham, Lord John Russell, Lord Dun-

cannon, and Sir J. Graham) were themselves partial, but a concession made to facilitate the raising of the elective franchise in cities and boroughs, which would, of itself, have militated against the dangers of its adoption. Lord Grey disclaimed any personal preference for it; though some of the Cabinet favoured it, the majority were adverse. But the King's opposition settled the matter: "the strong and decided opinion expressed by Your Majesty must operate as a command which Earl Grey feels himself bound to obey." (February 5, *Correspondence*, i. 106.)

On the question of reducing royal pensions on the Civil List, the King fortunately found his Minister in agreement with himself. The reduction of existing pensions was a question on which the King felt bound to make a stand, as it seemed to him to involve the constitutional attributes of the Monarchy, and to be "one feature of a systematic attack upon the power and prerogatives of the Crown." (*ib.* i. 120.) Lord Grey's own feelings were so much in unison with the King's—to whom he admitted a debt of gratitude that he could never repay—that he even contemplated retirement if the House of Commons pressed the subject. (*ib.* i. 115, February 7, 1831.) The matter was settled to the King's satisfaction, but the publication of the Pension List had raised a wish for its reduction, as Grey said, not only in the "clamorous part of the public," but among men of sober character, and even of Tory politics, so that even rich City merchants had refused to sign a resolution in support of Government, by reason of its refusal to reduce these pensions. (*ib.* i. 125, February 11, 1831.)

The King suspected that Committees of the Commons on the Civil List and Salaries were a usurpation of his own functions. He was confident that the history of the country had "never before exhibited an instance wherein a Committee of the House of Commons had presumed to dictate to the Sovereign *how* he was to conduct his Civil List in all its minute details, and the amount of the salaries which he was to grant to each and every one of his own personal servants"; and he wished an inquiry made by the Crown lawyers and the Lord Chancellor. (March 3, 1831.) He complained of the systematic determination betrayed in the debates on the

subject to reduce the influence of the Crown, and to lower the dignity of the Monarchy. (*ib.* i. 143, March 11.) The proposal to reduce the salaries of the Lords and Grooms of the Bedchamber from £13,171 to £10,000 entailed consequences which were "not very palatable"; so that great was the frightened monarch's relief when the Lord Chancellor and the Crown lawyers agreed that the Committees "had exceeded and were exceeding" their powers. (*ib.* i. 152, March 7, 1831.)

As early as March 19 it became apparent that the opposition to Reform might be successful. A Cabinet meeting was held that evening to consider a possible dissolution, and Lord Grey begged Sir Herbert Taylor to ascertain the King's views on the subject. These were expressed next day in no uncertain terms. To a dissolution it was "his bounden duty most strenuously to object." In the excited state of the country he feared rioting in England and rebellion in Ireland. His secretary felt that these contingencies had taken so firm a hold on his mind that no argument could shake him; his objections must be looked on as "final and conclusive." Above all, he feared that a new Parliament would cause a schism between the two Houses, the consequences of which always presented themselves to him "in a most fearful light." Fortunately, the carrying of the second reading on March 22 by a majority of one rendered dissolution unnecessary and averted the crisis. But had the majority been the other way, the resignation of the Ministry must have followed the King's refusal to dissolve, and with greater possibilities of disturbance than would have attended a General Election.

But the difficulty was only averted for a moment, for within less than a month, on April 19, the Government's defeat by 299 to 291 on General Gascoigne's motion compelled the Cabinet to press for a dissolution. It is difficult to see what other course was possible, and the King, in a long letter, waived most reluctantly his strong objections. He continued to speak of Reform as "a fearful experiment," and to the times as "awful," and to advocate modifications. He referred to the strides made in the country by the spirit of revolution from recent events in France and Belgium

(May 15, 1831); he had noticed "with extreme pain and alarm the early effects produced in this country by the contagious example of the recent French Revolution" following so closely on his accession. (*ib.* i. 267.)

The dissolution was attended by dramatic circumstances. On April 21 there was a scene of considerable disorder in the Commons, but it was nothing to that in the Lords. There was indescribable confusion and noise from one end of the House to the other, these passionless legislators actually scuffling and shaking their hands at one another in anger. (Buckingham's *Court, etc., of William IV.*, i. 286; *Greville*, ii. 139.) Suddenly there were cries of "The King!" followed by the announcement of a prorogation and dissolution.

To the Conservative party this very natural dissolution seemed almost revolutionary. Its leader, the Duke of Wellington, on May 21, 1831, wrote to the Duke of Buckingham that he did not believe that the King of England "had taken a step so fatal to his monarchy since the day that Charles I. passed the Act to deprive himself of the powers of proroguing and dissolving Parliament, as King William IV. did on the 22nd of April last." (*Buckingham*, i. 296.) Even after the Election had passed off without the dire results the King had feared, and the King himself was forced to admit that the result had been to quench those demands for annual Parliaments, universal suffrage, vote by ballot and repeal of the Union, the Duke thought that the possible creation of peers could only be "for the purpose of the destruction of the Monarchy." (July 22, 1831, *ib.* i. 333.) He believed that if the King were to quarrel with Lord Grey tomorrow about the coronation robes or any other such point, and to wish to change his Ministers, the Monarchy would be overturned (*ib.* i. 336, July 28); so insecure seemed the Monarchy at that time to partisan imagination.

Then, again, the clash between the two Houses loomed on the horizon, and the King began to entreat for such concessions on the original scheme as would soften the hostility of the Lords. Grey replied that such concessions would only weaken the Bill and would in no wise buy off such hostility. Some acerbity began to affect the correspondence. He had previously had to complain that the opposition of

persons in the Queen's household and the declared hostility of the Princesses had roused most unfair suspicions of the King's own loyalty to Reform. (*Correspondence*, i. 260, May 8.) On June 6 the complaint was of persons who, though voting against the Government, lost nothing either in their official situation or in the favour of the Court. (*ib.* i. 287.) The King retorted that "he had not hesitated to discard from his household any individual, whether holding a superior or inferior position, who, being a member of either House, had withheld or stated his intention of withholding his support from the Government upon the question of Reform." But he could not sacrifice lifelong friendships to political considerations; he had "ever avoided to attach himself exclusively to any party, or to yield to the influence of political opinion or feeling in the selection of his friends and associates." (*ib.* i. 290, 291.) Lord Grey had to disclaim the presumption of objecting to the King's avoiding all distinction of party in his private society; but he stuck to his protest, that the "active and avowed hostility of persons connected by official situations with Your Majesty's Court had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the strength of the Government in the House of Lords." (*ib.* i. 295, 296, June 7.) Again, "a most unfair use was made of His Majesty's kindness to those who, either by themselves or their connections, held places at Court"; but perhaps he had written too hastily, and would never revert to the subject. (*ib.* i. 298, June 7.) The incident well illustrates one of the greatest difficulties which has always marred the smooth working of the constitutional machine; the frequent antithesis between the monarch's environment and the monarch's ministers.

On September 8, 1831, the Coronation came as a momentary relief to the political tension. But it did not pass without a humiliating concession for the King. For when the Coronation ceremonial was taken to him for his approval, he strongly objected to that portion of it which compelled him to be kissed by all the bishops, in succession to the Archbishop of Canterbury's kiss, after the latter had spoken the words of homage. He most sensibly ordered that part to be struck out; but, on the Archbishop's remonstrance, the King, as Greville says, "knocked under,"

and was obliged to submit to the kiss not only of the temporal but the spiritual Peers (ii. 189); a heavy price even for kingly honours.

But the Coronation, despite all this kissing, added nothing to the King's wisdom. Greville says that impressions on his mind were like impressions on the sand. (ii. 240.) In that same month a speech that he made at St. James's at the close of a great dinner was the talk of the town. Lord Sefton declared that he had never felt so ashamed, and Lord Grey is described as having been ready to sink into the earth. (ii. 197–8.)

It was a time difficult for any statesman to weather; when nobody looked on any institution as secure or any interest as safe (*Greville*, ii. 286); when the "awful thing was the vast extent of misery and distress which prevailed, and the evidence of the rotten foundation on which the whole fabric of this gorgeous society rested"; when thousands upon thousands of human beings were reduced to the lowest stage of moral and physical degradation, with no more of the necessaries of life than served to keep body and soul together, and whole classes of artisans lacked the means of subsistence. (*ib.* ii. 285.)

The Reform Bill, having passed the Commons on September 21, was wrecked in the Lords on second reading on October 8. The clash the King had feared had come; he had always told Grey what would happen if the Bill was not modified; nevertheless, he deprecated the resignation of the Ministry. (*Correspondence*, i. 363, October 8, 1831.) Their decision was to continue in office and to bring in a new but equally efficient Bill in a fresh session. Windows were broken in London; Nottingham Castle was burnt; and before the month of October was out the riots at Bristol indicated the rising temper of the country. The King naturally got nervous, and again pressed in any future Bill for regard to the opinions of the aristocracy, "to a majority of the House of Lords." (*ib.* i. 380.) He deprecated representing such a majority, 199 Peers, as a *faction* (*ib.* i. 381, October 17): in allusion to Lord John Russell's famous remark at Birmingham that it was impossible that "the whisper of a faction should prevail

against the voice of a nation." The King became terrified by the prospect of a rejection of the next Reform Bill, and the position became well-nigh impossible both for him and his Minister. The latter warned the King that a second rejection must be followed by his resignation, which would imperil both the peace of the country and the permanent interests of the Crown. (*ib.* i. 437, November 22, 1831.)

Parliament was prorogued till December 6, and in the meantime both political leaders were active. The Duke of Wellington took the occasion of writing to the King in November about the arming of the Political Associations, in order to try to oust his rival. "I did it at a period of the year at which I knew that if the King wished to get rid of the bonds in which he is held, I could assist him in doing so. There was time to call a new Parliament, and the sense of the country would have been taken on a question on which there would be no doubt." But the King did not take the hint, the Duke complaining that the great mischief of all was "the weakness of our poor King, who cannot or will not see his danger, or the road out of it when it is pointed out to him." (Buckingham's *William IV.*, i. 385–7, January 2, 1832.)

Lord Grey, on the other hand, was doing what he could to influence individuals, especially dignitaries of the Church, in favour of the forthcoming Bill. The Bishop of London promised to vote for it, and he mentioned four others as specially hopeful. The Archbishop of Canterbury would not commit himself. Lord Grey added that he thought nothing would so much influence His Grace and most of the Bishops as an expression of the royal opinion on the consequences of a second rejection. Especially with the Bishop of Worcester might His Majesty's wishes be decisive ; and there were also Lay Peers connected with the Court who, not holding offices themselves, would yield, he was sure, to a similar influence. (*Correspondence*, i. 444, November 25.) There was something humiliating in the Prime Minister's being reduced to this sort of cadging for the votes of the Spiritual Peers, and it received at first prompt snubbing from His Majesty. He could not reconcile it with his duty to exert his influence, directly or indirectly, with Spiritual or Lay Peers (except with those of the latter belonging to his House-

hold) towards obtaining their assent to the Bill. (*Buckingham*, i. 448, November 27, 1832.)

Nevertheless it was nothing but the King's personal influence that ultimately carried the Reform Bill. On December 9 Grey was glad to hear that the King proposed to invite Archbishop Howley to Brighton ; he was sure that the King's opinion "would have the most beneficial effect in that quarter." But when the visit took place on December 15–17, the King could get nothing out of Archbishop Howley, who only "expressed himself very mildly" on the subject ; and Grey, whilst thanking the King for his attempt, could but "lament the weakness and indecision which appeared to be the prevailing features in His Grace's character." (*Correspondence*, ii. 19, 33, 48.)

The Bishop of Worcester was worked on through Sir H. Taylor, who told him that the King thought any peers very ill-advised who would refuse to let the Bill go into Committee. Accordingly the Bishop promised his vote for the second reading. (*ib.* ii. 63, December 26.) He kept his promise on April 14, 1832, when the second reading was carried in the Lords by the narrow majority of 9 (184–173), but in May he was among the majority which voted against the Government on Lord Lyndhurst's motion for postponing the disfranchisement of the boroughs on Schedule A. Sir Herbert argued in the same way with Lord Burghersh, calculating that he would tell Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Beverley, who would naturally argue that the secretary's language clearly indicated His Majesty's sentiments. Of so much weight was the mere opinion of the King in the days of the fourth William.

But the bishops were difficult to manage. Most of them were opposed to the Government on other questions besides the Reform Bill. On March 9, 1832, they helped to defeat the Government on a motion for a Select Committee on the Glove Trade. The King was concerned that so many bishops were in the majority ; and he expressed his intention to Lord Grey to see the Archbishop of York and "to speak to him seriously respecting the course which the bishops were pursuing." (*ib.* ii. 254, March 11, 1832.) The relationship rather resembled that of a schoolmaster to his boys.

On a later occasion, when on a question relating to Portugal

the bishops had voted against the Government, the King wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury a letter of severe reproof to the bishops for so voting against the Government where no Church interests were concerned. (June 28, 1833, *Greville*, ii. 392.) For this he was reproached with unconstitutional action; but his defence was that he hoped to make them less unpopular through their being induced to take a less prominent part in politics. He did "not deny that in endeavouring to moderate the inconsiderate zeal of some of the high dignitaries of the Church, he sought to extricate himself and his Government from difficulty"; but he had "an anxious desire to screen those respectable individuals from the increasing effect of hostile feelings and the popular clamour of which they were becoming the objects." (Stockmar's *Memoirs*, i. 323.)

Still the creation of peers had from the first seemed to Lord Grey the only way of securing the second reading, though his dislike of that method was only exceeded by that of the King. First the possible number required was put at 21; then at an undefined quantity; and lastly 50 or 60 was estimated as the maximum. The King's consent was throughout reluctant and qualified. He disliked the precedent; was afraid of permanently altering the character of the House of Lords. His own opinion of himself was that he had come to the throne "with his judgment happily unfettered by party prejudice"; it had always been his desire "to remove difficulties rather than to raise them"; he was not conscious of having "betrayed any disposition to an extravagant display of dignity and splendour, or to the exhibition of despotic and arbitrary power." (*Correspondence*, ii. 79.) But the times were those of great peril when "the overthrow of all legitimate authority, the destruction of ancient institutions, of social order, and of every gradation and link of society were threatened; when a revolutionary and demoralising spirit was making frightful strides; when a poisonous press, almost unchecked, guided, excited, and at the same time controlled public opinion." Therefore he insisted on Ministers, after Reform should have passed, resisting any further encroachments tending to the further reduction of the authority and dignity of the Crown.

In the King's view the interests of the monarchy and of the country ran more danger from the growing power of the Commons than from any exertion of the Lords to maintain its independence in a discussion of a great constitutional question. (*Correspondence*, ii. 161, January 28.)

With a monarch of naturally so Tory a cast of mind had Lord Grey to work. The King was right when he said that he did not consider his Minister's situation more enviable than his own. (*ib.* ii. 189, February 4, 1832.) It was a pitiable one for both of them. And Lord Grey told the King that, could he have foreseen the irreconcilable opposition of the Lords, he would never have undertaken the Government. (*ib.* ii. 163, January 29.) Yet the two worked gallantly together, strange and unequal mates in a common task. Their correspondence is an extraordinary exhibition of mutual confidence and good temper, rarely interrupted by occasional signs of irritability. Grey felt that the possible rejection of the Bill on the second reading would be for himself "such ruin as never fell upon a public man." (*ib.* ii. 232, February 17.) Yet he resisted the pressure of his party to insist on the creation of peers, and was prepared to offer his immediate resignation with no other regret than for his separation "from so kind and indulgent a master." (*ib.* ii. 213.) Nor can one doubt the King's assurance that his earnest desire was to deal fairly and squarely with him; that he felt his own security would be endangered by any departure from an honest and straightforward course, and that, if he were to deceive him, he might in the hour of need look in vain for aid from others. (*ib.* ii. 235, February 18.)

For the difficulty was that such deception was imputed to the King. The King's hospitality to the most bitter opponents of the Bill was used to spread false reports of his views; "feeling that they were equally well received, encouraged those who voted in opposition," with a result very injurious to the Government. (*ib.* ii. 167, January 29, 1832.) In making this remonstrance Grey offered to resign. The Lords were encouraged in their resistance by the fact that the King's objection to creating peers had either been discovered or guessed at by those who approached him and who

had not scrupled to propagate the most unfounded statements. Sir H. Taylor replied that it was difficult or impossible for the King always to conceal the feelings which he had early imbibed and which events had not tended to weaken, but that he was sure he had never said a word that could be construed into a want of confidence in his Ministers, or justify a doubt of their security; people would exaggerate their impressions, nor did he see how it could be avoided. (*ib.* ii. 179.) A week before the second reading Grey writes of the adversaries of the Bill as "more unblushing than ever in the confidence with which they circulated statements of the King's dislike of it and of his aversion to a creation of peers." (*ib.* ii. 341.) And that the second reading failed to pass by a majority which "would have insured the passing of the Bill without much difficulty," Grey attributed to "the unfortunate effect produced by the misrepresentations which were circulated respecting the language held by the King." (*ib.* ii. 380, April 21, 1832.)

This indirect influence of the King against the Bill counteracted his more direct influence on its behalf. But the latter was never insincere or inoperative. In vain he tried to persuade Lord Hill, Commander-in-Chief, to promise his vote; and when the General would only promise abstention, the King, "mortified and disappointed," clearly contemplated Lord Hill's resignation, which from personal regard and appreciation of the General's services Grey declined to press. (*ib.* ii. 276.)

"Nothing," Lord Albemarle told Creevey, "could exceed the King's ecstasies" at having such a load off his mind as the carrying of the second reading in the Lords. (ii. 244.) But the strain had been too much for the King's nerves; for within two days of the second reading the King wrote a letter to Lord Grey expressive not only of a want of confidence, but even of suspicion and distrust. It was on foreign policy. The King avowed his entire mistrust of France; deprecated the adoption of too liberal a system, too unreserved a leaning to "the spirit of the times," such as might excite the suspicion of the great Continental monarchies in regard to Poland. He thought that France had not abandoned her desires for conquest; believed that she wished to recover Belgium and

extend again her boundary to the Rhine. He desired that no instruction should be given to his ambassadors abroad without his concurrence. (*Correspondence*, ii. 351–5, April 16.) Grey at once accepted this as an expression of want of confidence, and offered to resign. There was an interview at which the King renewed expressions of confidence, but there was an absence of the former "cordial feeling." The incident shows the extraordinary difficulty under our system of the successful co-operation in government of men of such fundamentally incompatible opinions and characters as William IV. and Lord Grey.

The crisis came on May 7, on the carrying of Lord Lyndhurst's motion against the Government by 151 to 116 for postponing the clauses which disfranchised the rotten boroughs. The next day the Cabinet suggested a creation of peers as preferable to the Government's resignation, and Lord Grey and Lord Brougham visited the King with this object at Windsor. At this interview, according to Creevey, the King failed to preserve his usual civility, showed strong reluctance to the proposal, and said Lord Grey should have his answer next day. (ii. 245.) This answer on May 9 informed the Cabinet that the King had come to "the painful resolution of accepting their resignation," and Lord Grey described an interview that he had with him as "very distressing"; "it was painful to see His Majesty so deeply affected." "Our beloved Billy," wrote Creevey, "cuts a damnable figure in this business." The defeat of the Government encouraged him to let the Duke of Cumberland tell his friends that he had no intention of creating peers. (ii. 245.) A Conservative Ministry had thus become the alternative. The King's own account of his action at this crisis was that he made "an unsuccessful attempt to change the Government, and to defeat the measure for which they had contended," and he expressed gratitude to Lord Grey for not having, after his recall, taken any advantage of the position in which this abortive attempt to wreck Reform had placed him towards Lord Grey and his party. (Stockmar's *Memoirs*, i. 321.)

Yet at the levée of May 10 the King three times implored Lord Brougham not to leave him, whilst he assured Lord

Grey that George II. had not felt more bitterly at parting with Sir Robert Walpole, or George III. at parting with Lord North, than he felt at parting with his departing Minister. And on leaving town to return to Windsor he "was rather roughly treated by the people" at several places. (*Creevey*, ii. 246.)

The ship of State was well-nigh on the rocks in this month of May. Creevey thought that the Crown itself was really in some danger, whilst the fate of the Reform Bill hung in the balance. (ii. 247.) If the Opposition had to be called on to undertake a Reform Bill, it would have to be one no less efficient than the Whig Bill. Peel declined to attempt such a task, but the Duke of Wellington, whose opposition to Reform of any sort had been most uncompromising from the start, was at first disposed to try. The King's joy at the prospect of deliverance from the Whigs is said to have been unbounded. He told the Duke he had only consented to the creation of peers after every kind of persecution. He told Lord Verulam that he considered such creation contrary to his Coronation oath. Greville's comment seems too bitter, but it probably represents a large section of contemporary opinion: "His ignorance, weakness, and levity put him in a miserable plight, and prove him to be one of the silliest old gentlemen in his dominions, but I believe he is mad." He describes him as having on May 16, after a dinner to the Jockey Club, made so many speeches "so ridiculous and nonsensical . . . such a mass of confusion, trash, and imbecility as made one laugh and blush at the same time." (ii. 308.)

Greville describes him as "at his wits' end"; which is likely enough, seeing that the Duke of Wellington and Lord Lyndhurst soon undeceived him as to the possibility of their forming a Government. But at the same time they assured him that "as individual peers they would not attend the further discussion of the Reform Bill"; and the King received similar assurances from other peers. (*Correspondence*, ii. 428, May 18, 1832, *The King to Lord Mansfield.*)

On May 16 Lord Grey, therefore, had to be recalled, subject to a declaration to be made in the Lords of the intention of the Duke and other peers to drop further opposition. (*ib.* ii. 420, May 17.) But that same day not only was no

such declaration made, but the Duke and Lord Lyndhurst both made speeches of "extreme violence," and other peers speeches of "extreme virulence"; thus violating the condition which the King had regarded as an alternative to the creation of peers he was so anxious to avoid. The King was told that several peers had refrained from making their expected declaration in consequence of an unconciliatory speech from Lord Grey. But in any case the Cabinet was forced back to its demand for a creation of peers as a condition of continuing in office; and to this the King consented. (*Correspondence*, ii. 435, May 18.) Yet it never came to such creation. The royal influence, exercised chiefly through his tactful secretary, procured at last sufficient abstentions to nullify further opposition. It was the lesser of two evils to submit to Reform without the new peers than to Reform with them as an added evil to it. And thus at length on June 4 this much-debated measure successfully passed its third reading; a lasting monument to the honour of Lord Grey and his Cabinet, and in no small degree to the King, whose personal influence it was that in the end bore down opposition. He had carried his point of forcing the measure through the Legislature without resort to a creation of peers.

CHAPTER II

William the Conquered

The passing of the Reform Bill cleared the political atmosphere for a time, but the fundamental antagonism between the King and his Ministers steadily increased. Although on many subjects he held Liberal opinions, as on the policy of State payment to the Irish Catholic clergy, his dread of democracy and fear of change got the better of him as time went on. When Lord Normanby went to take leave of him before going as Governor to Jamaica, the King harangued him in favour of the slave trade, "of which he had always been a great admirer; a sentiment for which his subjects would have torn him to pieces if they had heard," says Greville. (ii. 313, 314.) One of the great evils of the recent convulsion was, in Greville's eyes, that "the King's imbecility had been exposed to the world, and in his person the regal authority had fallen into contempt." (*ib.* ii. 314.) "Never was a King less respected." (*ib.* iii. 28.) Greville went so far in disrespect as to speak of him as "the very silly old gentleman who wears the Crown." (*ib.* iii. 57.)

It was unfortunate for the country that its destiny was thus at the mercy of a King whose capacity to fill his high position with credit was less than equal to his wish to do so. The worry of it was almost too much for him. On March 4, 1833, Sir Thomas Hardy told Greville's brother that he thought the King would go mad; he was so excitable, *loathing* his Ministers, particularly Graham, and dying to go to war. (*ib.* ii. 372.) But, however he may have felt about war at that time, three years later on November 7, 1836, in a letter to Lord Melbourne, he advocated strict neutrality in the war he thought approaching between the rival principles of absolute and of republican government. (*Melbourne Papers*, 354.) Yet on July 18 of the same year

Melbourne wrote as follows to his brother: "We all wish for peace, but Metternich should remember that, whatever should be the disposition of other kings, kings of England like wars, which they wage in comparative security, and which offer to them nothing but pleasurable excitement, and commands and promotions to give or to make." (*Melbourne Papers*, 348.)

Despite the King, however, the first Reformed Parliament of 1833 passed the Abolition of Slavery in our colonies with flying colours; that is, without even opposition from the House of Lords, and without serious complaint of the twenty million pounds which the compensation of the planters cost the tax-payer.

But the questions of Church Reform touched the King more closely. The payment by the Irish farmer of tithes for the support of the Protestant Church in Ireland had long been a scandal, and one of the causes of the everlasting disturbance of the country. In December 1831 a mob of some 2000 men, armed with pitchforks and stones, attacked a tithe-collecting force in Kilkenny, the result of which was that the chief constable and sixteen police were killed and wounded. (*Grey and William IV.*, ii. 39.) Even the King, like his brothers George IV. and the Duke of York before him, came to regard a State provision for the Catholic Irish clergy as the only chance of peace in Ireland. (*ib.* ii. 55, 56.) Legislation was clearly necessary; yet when on February 18, 1832, the Report of the Tithe Commissioners had been introduced to the House of Lords, Lord Grey declared that it had "produced such an ebullition of party violence and animosity" as he had never witnessed. (*ib.* ii. 236.) A Tithe Bill passed its third reading in the Commons on August 5, 1834, but it was speedily disposed of on its second reading on August 11 by the Lords, who had discovered a very simple way of dishing the Reform Act.

It was this Irish Church legislation that finally estranged the King from the Liberal party. As the proposal to appropriate the surplus funds of the Irish Church to secular purposes caused the withdrawal of four prominent Ministers from the Cabinet, one can imagine the feelings of the King. Lord Grey himself was on the point of resigning in May 1834,

and was only prevented by Lord Ebrington's address of confidence and remonstrance. The King chose this moment to make a speech, with the tears running down his cheeks, in answer to an address presented to him at the levée of May 28 by the Irish prelates. He declared his firm attachment to the Church and his determination to maintain it. It was in short an open declaration of war against the policy of Lord Grey's Ministry, and no doubt acted largely as among the motives that finally led to his personal resignation on July 7, 1834.

Writing of this period, Greville says that it is "difficult to describe the state of agitation into which the minds of people of all classes are thrown . . . of the feeling of insecurity, of doubt, of apprehension which pervades all classes." (iii. 19, July 25, 1833.) On July 15, 1834, Lord Melbourne succeeded Lord Grey as Prime Minister, and in vain the King wished Grey to return. Between the King pulling in one direction and the new democracy as powerfully in the other, the greatest statesman of the nineteenth century did wisely to withdraw. The King then fell back on his father's idea of a Government on a wide bottom, and with this object insisted on Lord Melbourne's writing to the Duke of Wellington, Peel, and Lord Stanley to join his Ministry: an idea which was promptly scouted as impossible. (*ib.* iii. 112, July 17.) The King's own admission was that by such a union of parties he hoped that a Conservative object might be effected, and that his failure to effect this union "disappointed hopes which he had long cherished." (Stockmar's *Memoirs*, i. 325.) When the scheme failed, and he was forced to accept Lord Melbourne in July 1834, he clearly stated his "predilection for Conservative measures, and for those who advocated them," and his wish to guard himself against further encroachments of individuals or principles he mistrusted. (*ib.* i. 326.) In short the King was in the uncomfortable position of having become an out-and-out Tory yoked unwillingly to a Liberal Government. And that has frequently been the uncomfortable position of our Constitutional Monarchs.

Equally vain with his attempt to obtain a Coalition Ministry, to temper the Radical tendencies of the Whig

Cabinet, was the King's attempt to obtain from Lord Melbourne a promise of the exclusion from office of individuals he disliked, and a pledge to leave untouched the English or the Irish Church. Lord Melbourne resolutely refused to accept office on such conditions. (*Melbourne Papers*, 204–8.)

The crisis came in November 1834, when the tenth Lord Spencer died, thereby necessitating the removal of Lord Althorp to the House of Lords and the choice of a new leader in the House of Commons. So on the 13th Lord Melbourne went to Brighton to consult the King as to whether fresh arrangements should be suggested or whether the King would prefer the advice of other persons. He expressed readiness to submit a new arrangement, and confidence in the continuance of the support of the House of Commons. (Palmerston in Stockmar's *Memoirs*, i. 308.) But the King could not stand the idea of Lord John Russell's succession to Lord Althorp as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House of Commons. Lord John was as obnoxious to the King as Fox had been to his father. He hated his Liberal opinions on Church Reform, and thought him a "dangerous little Radical." (*Greville*, iii. 151.) Also he declared that Brougham could not continue as Chancellor; he expressed dissatisfaction with the Irish Church Bill, and with every one who had had a hand in framing it. (Buckingham's *William IV.*, ii. 139, 140.) The King asked Lord Melbourne about the measures in contemplation for the Irish Church and Municipal Reform; and the reply being "of a nature that alarmed him, he instantly resolved to get rid of such dangerous Ministers." So wrote the Duke of Cumberland to the Duke of Buckingham on December 5, 1834. (*ib.* ii. 147.)

Whether the King's resolution to dismiss the Ministry was as instantaneous as his brother thought admits of doubt; for the contingency of Lord Spencer's death must have been foreseen; Lord Grey had told him that the consequence would justify the break-up of the Melbourne Ministry (*Stockmar*, i. 333), and Lord Palmerston was of opinion that the whole episode was "a preconcerted measure. . . . merely to gratify the ambition of the Duke of Wellington, and the prejudices or sordid feelings of his

followers." (*ib.* i. 309, 310.) Anyhow, the Whigs were shown to the door, "regularly kicked out," as Greville says (iii. 148); "unceremoniously kicked out . . . in the plenitude of their fancied strength and utterly unconscious of danger, they were dismissed in the most positive, summary, and peremptory manner." (*ib.* iii. 158.)

It is of interest to notice some of the points brought out by the King himself in the long statement of the political history of his reign which he presented to Sir Robert Peel on the completion of the new Ministry in January 1835. The King had expected Lord Melbourne's resignation on the death of Lord Spencer as a matter of course, and assumed that the object of the Minister's visit to Brighton was to offer his resignation, which the King had made up his mind to accept. When the only arrangement suggested by Lord Melbourne was the leadership of Lord John Russell, he objected strongly: Lord John had neither the abilities nor the influence requisite, and "would make a wretched figure when opposed by Sir Robert Peel and Mr. Stanley." (*ib.* i. 329.) Further objections to him were that he was pledged to encroachments on the Irish Church, which the King was determined to resist. Also the "extravagant conduct of Lord Brougham" as Chancellor had shaken his confidence in the Ministry. In vain Lord Melbourne tried to reassure him, by declaring himself uncommitted on Church Reform measures, and by reminding the King of his freedom of assent to such measures. The King was resolved to be free of him, as any Government of his must be supported by those whose Church views were at variance with the King's, and therefore bound to lead to serious differences between himself and them when Parliament met.

In the King's version of the affair there is no indication of Lord Melbourne's not having done all he could to reconcile the King to his continuance in office; and as to prearrangement with the Tory party, the King insists that when he came to his final resolution on November 14, there had been no communication *of any sort* from which he could learn their sentiments, or their means of relieving him from the difficulty in which he had felt it his duty to place himself; though he entertained "sanguine expectations, amounting

almost to conviction," that he could count on their support. (*Stockmar*, i. 338.)

It was a mild *coup d'état*, and its mildness was due to the tact shown both by the King and Lord Melbourne in their parting correspondence. (*Melbourne Papers*, 219–27.) Though the conversation between them on November 14 was described by the King as " very painful," he declared he could never forget the Minister's words, and Lord Melbourne declared an equal inability to forget His Majesty's words or manner on that occasion. He asserted with obvious sincerity the " strongest personal attachment " to the King, who, in Melbourne's opinion, " made his election conscientiously and uninfluenced by others," nor would Lord Melbourne " positively venture to pronounce that he was wrong." (*ib.* 227.)

The constitutionality of the King's action was much discussed at the time, and has been since. But, given the King's position and opinions, it is difficult to condemn his action. His own defence, based on differences in the Ministry itself, had much reason in it. The episode rather reflects on the political system itself, which places so much power for obstruction in the hands of a monarch, and subjects to his caprice the entire course of legislation. There was nothing in William's character to entitle him to this power. Stockmar complains of the weakness of his character, of his lack of resolution, of his susceptibility to his personal environment, of his erroneous belief in his own great political gifts (i. 312, 313) ; and that pure chance should place such a man on the throne at a time of rapid political development was, as it remains, a palpable imperfection in the practice of Constitutional Monarchy.

The King doubtless looked forward to an easier time with Peel and Wellington at the head of the Commons and Lords respectively. But the Duke had come to regard the House of Commons as an impossible institution. On January 31, 1834, he wrote to the Duke of Buckingham : " The Government of the country, the protection of the lives, privileges, and properties of its subjects . . . are impracticable as long as such a deliberative Assembly exists as the House of Commons, with all the powers and privileges

which it has amassed in the course of the last two hundred years." (Buckingham's *William IV.*, ii. 77.) And it is curious to find the Duke again sitting in the Chamber which he had declared to Lord Buckingham that he would never enter again if the Reform Bill became law. (*ib.* i. 261.)

The new Ministry had to please also an almost greater King than the occupant of the throne; that was Barnes, the editor of *The Times*. The only conditions on which Barnes would prop them up were that there should be no mutilation of the Reform Act and no change in foreign policy. The subjection of these great Ministers to the editor, as described by Greville, verged almost on the abject. (iii. 159–61.)

The Dissolution on December 30, 1834, and the subsequent General Election went some way to justify the King's hopes that a Tory reaction had come over the country; for the Reform party lost one hundred seats in the boroughs and counties, and the great disparity between the two parties was reduced to 332 on the Liberal against 319 on the Conservative side. Indications of coming trouble were given by the election on February 20, 1835, of Abercromby to the Speakership by 316 to 306; and the inevitable antagonism between the Lords and Commons, consequent on the Reform Act, caused just anticipations of some violent collision between them. Hobhouse thought that such a collision might very likely lead to a Republic. (*Greville*, iii. 201.)

Nor were the relations between the Duke and the King as pleasant as might have been expected. The Duke is said to have been "bored to death with the King, who thought it necessary to be giving advice and opinions about different matters always to the last degree ridiculous and absurd." The Duke was obliged to write him long answers "respectfully telling him what an old fool he was." (*ib.* iii. 208.) "It is difficult to imagine anything more irksome for a Government beset with difficulties like this than to have to discuss the various details of their measures with a silly, bustling old fellow, who can by no possibility comprehend the scope and meaning of anything." (*ib.* iii. 209.) This may seem a harsh judgment, but in examining the working of

monarchy as an institution the impression of an observer like Greville cannot be overlooked.

The end was bound to come speedily, and it did so on April 3, 1835, when the Government was defeated by 322 to 289 on Lord John Russell's resolution on the surplus revenues of the Irish Church. On the 8th Peel announced his resignation, and the unfortunate King had again to fall back on a Whig Ministry under Lord Melbourne, which was to last for the remainder of his life.

The King put as good a face on the matter as he could, but Greville assures us that he was "very miserable." The Duchess of Gloucester described him as being "in the most pitiable state of distress, constantly in tears, and saying that he felt his crown tottering on his head." (*Greville*, iii. 257, April 11, 1835.)

On April 3, 1835, Peel told Greville that the King was in a miserable state at the prospect before him, and all the more so for feeling how much there was in it which fell personally upon himself. (iii. 248.) Monarchy in England never reached a lower ebb, nor the monarch a more miserable position than when William IV., having dismissed the Whigs in November 1834, was obliged to recall them in April 1835.

He again made a vain attempt to get a Coalition Ministry, to which Lord Melbourne and Lord Lansdowne at once refused to be parties. Ultimately it devolved on Lord Melbourne alone to form a Ministry, but he laid down his terms to the King with great firmness. He insisted, as a proof of the Crown's confidence, that no future members of the Royal Household, whose opinions were hostile to the Government, should be selected from either House of Parliament. Existing members might remain subject to a similar condition. He insisted no less on the creation of seven or eight peers, as some counterbalance to the six peerages created by Sir Robert Peel in his few months of office. (*Melbourne Papers*, 269–72, April 13, 15, 1835.)

Nor would Lord Melbourne give way to the King's wish to bar legislation affecting the Irish Church. The appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Church to popular education, as it had been the principle which had wrecked Peel's Ministry, so it must be the main principle of the new one.

As little would he give way to the King's desire for the exclusion from office of individuals obnoxious to the King; any one qualified by law to serve the King the Minister must have power to recommend. (*ib.* 273–6, April 15, 1835.) And, when the King still raised the Irish Church question, he insisted on its being a preliminary condition to his acceptance of office that the King should give both his preliminary consent, before the Bill was introduced, and his subsequent consent after it had passed through Parliament, and promise his support to its progress through Parliament. (*ib.* 277.) The Minister prevailed, and the King was conquered.

But it was a sort of drawn battle, owing to the co-operation between the King and the Lords in the frustration of Whig reforms. He objected strongly to the Municipal Corporation Bill; a measure which only passed on September 7, 1835, after much friction and with much of what Lord Londonderry called "doctoring" by the Lords.

A similar Bill for Ireland was less happy in its fate. The King had to be pacified by Lord Melbourne for its having been introduced without his previous sanction. But, as 106 of its original 140 clauses were rejected by the Lords, it is not surprising that failure to effect a compromise ended in its withdrawal. (*ib.* 307–11.)

On June 16, 1835, Lord Melbourne "humbly" submitted to the King the heads of the Irish Tithe Bill. He regretted both the time and manner of its introduction, but pleaded necessity and the pledge involved in the resolution of the House of Commons. The King admitted the justice of the plea, and, with a hint at his veto, resigned himself to its introduction. The Lords, however, by rejecting the Appropriation clauses, saved the King from a resort to his veto. (*ib.* 208, 284–6.) And so it happened again in 1836. (*ib.* 306.) Throughout the period of the Whig Ministry, the Lords, as Greville puts it, were busy "bowling down Bills like ninepins" (iii. 368), for they knew they had the King at their back.

Yet it was a wretched time for the King. One of his ten children, Adolphus Fitzclarence, told Greville that his father abhorred all his Ministers, but hated Lord John Russell most of all; he was "in dreadfully low spirits, and could not rally

at all" ; the only thing that gave him a gleam of pleasure being Lord John's defeat in his Devonshire election. When Adolphus had suggested to the King that he should give a dinner for the Ascot races, the King declared it impossible : "I cannot give any dinners without inviting the Ministers, and I would rather see the Devil than any one of them in my house" (*Greville*, iii. 271, June 19, 1835) : this being almost identical with the feeling that George III. once expressed about George Grenville.

Recriminations were frequent. On June 28, 1835, the King wrote to Melbourne to complain of Lord Palmerston for having sounded the Czar before himself about Lord Durham's mission to St. Petersburg ; it was treating him as a mere cipher to assume that he would consent as a matter of course. Lord Melbourne replied that in sending the Royal letter to Palmerston he did not concur in the censure of a Minister, with whom he entirely agreed. (*Melbourne Papers*, 333, 334.)

The King had an especial aversion for Lord Glenelg, the Colonial Secretary. On July 1, 1835, the King made a speech in the Privy Council to Sir C. Grey, one of three Commissioners about to be sent to Canada, in which he reflected severely on Lord Glenelg, though without mentioning him by name. The Cabinet drew up a spirited remonstrance against the King's taking such an occasion for dissociating his opinions from those of his Ministers (*ib.* 334–6), and, according to Greville, Lord Melbourne told the King frankly that it was "impossible to carry on the Government, if he did such things." (iii. 279, 283.)

A few days after his outburst to Sir C. Grey, the King said to Lord Gosford, about to go to Canada as Governor, "Mind what you are about in Canada. By God, I will never consent to alienate the Crown lands nor to make the Council elective. Mind me, my Lord, the Cabinet is not my Cabinet ; they had better take care, or, by God, I will have them impeached." ("Hobhouse's Recollections" in *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 133.)

The year following, 1836, it was a question of further authorising the Commissioners to advise changes in the government of Canada. But the King was dead against

an elective Council. On June 7, he acquainted Lord Melbourne with his "determination and fixed resolution" never to consent to any such thing; no colony should be allowed "the most distant idea of the King's ever permitting" his confidential servants to entertain such an invasion of his prerogative. His objection, he said, to the adoption of the elective principle in the colonies was not fanciful, but founded on conviction, nor could there be any modification or hope of any concession. (*Melbourne Papers*, 349, 350.) It required several refusals before the King could be got to give way on the point.

It was in fact war to the knife between the King and his Ministers. They expressed themselves as resolved to go through with their task of government whatever the King might say or do; they no longer looked upon themselves as *his* Ministers, but the nation's. Lord Tavistock described them as "intolerably disgusted at his behaviour to them and to his studied incivility to everybody connected with them": as when at the Drawing-room he treated the Speaker Abercromby with "shocking rudeness," studiously overlooking him, and showing marked graciousness to Manners Sutton, whose defeat for the Speakership by 360 to 306 had given the first blow to the short-lived Peel Ministry, which ended on April 8, 1835. Seymour, Serjeant-at-Arms, said he had never seen a Speaker so used in the five-and-twenty years he had been there, and that it was most painful. (*Greville*, iii. 285, 286.)

"A very melancholy and mischievous state of affairs," commented Greville, and one that did "more to degrade the Monarchy than anything that had ever occurred—to exhibit the King publicly to the world as a cypher, and something less than a cypher, as an unsuccessful competitor in a public squabble, was to take from the Crown all the dignity with which it was invested." He blamed impartially the King for having got himself into such a sea of trouble, and his Ministers for the unrelenting nature of their revenge. The King's behaviour made matters worse. "When he found himself compelled to take these people back, and to surrender himself a prisoner into their hands, he should have swallowed the bitter pill and digested it, and not kept

rolling it in his mouth and making wry faces. . . . Had he treated them with that sort of courtesy which one gentleman may and ought to show to all those with whom he is unavoidably brought into contact, and which implies nothing as to feeling and inclination, he would have received from them that respect and attention which it would have been equally their interest and their desire to show." But "the intensity of his hatred of his Ministers" kept him in "his present unwise, irksome, and degrading posture." (*ib.* iii. 284, 285.)

Like his father and brother before him, the King came down solidly on the Tory side of the hedge. Greville calls him "a true King of the Tories"; in 1836 "waiting with the greatest impatience for the moment when his Ministers must resign." (*ib.* iii. 365.) He admitted none but Tories to his society; went in company with none but Tories; at Windsor had no guests but Tories. On his birthday, or the Queen's, no Whig Minister or any one connected with the Government was invited. His favourite guests were Tories specially distinguished for their violence and extreme opinions. Nothing was more undisguised than the King's aversion to his Ministers; he seemed resolved "to intimate that his compulsory reception of them should not extend to his society, and that though he could not help seeing them at St. James's, the gates of Windsor were shut against them." All this naturally irritated the Melbourne Ministers, but it had the effect of rendering them indifferent to his favour, and of teaching them to "consider themselves as the Ministers of the House of Commons and not of the Crown" (*ib.* iii. 293, 371): a needful lesson in the political education of the country. But what a commentary on the fiction that the Crown is of no political party!

Yet there is a good story of Lord Brougham having on one occasion pressed on William IV. the perusal of the correspondence between George III. and Lord North, to show him how his father had supported his Ministers, and of the King's having answered, "But George III., my Lord, was a party man, which I am not in the least." (*Creevey Papers*, ii. 318.) So little is it given to any of us to see himself as others see us.

But, apart from politics, William IV. made a good impression on his contemporaries. Creevey, whose language about him was the reverse of respectful, tells us how charmed he was by a very simple speech made to him by the King on the first occasion of his being invited to dinner. The King said: "Mr. Creevey, how d'ye do? I hope you are quite well. It is a long time since I had the pleasure of seeing you. Where do you reside, Mr. Creevey?" (ii. 259.) And despite political differences the King won the affection of his Ministers: as in the case of Lord Grey, who in February 1834, when the differences amongst his colleagues led him to threaten to retire, told the Cabinet that the conduct of the King had been so uniformly kind and generous that he felt it would be very dishonourable to desert him if it could be avoided. (*Correspondence*, ii. 274.) And Lord Melbourne, writing to his brother Sir Frederick Lamb on January 30, 1837, said, "the King is the fairest man in the world when matters are fairly put before him," though naturally impatient of any attempt to carry measures without his knowledge or consent. (*Melbourne Papers*, 317.) The King and Melbourne had certain mental affinities: the King in a letter to his Minister of August 16, 1835, declaring that he thought Melbourne to be a Conservative in the truest sense of the word, and to as great a degree as His Majesty himself. (*ib.* 309.) And it was Melbourne who described William IV. as "a being of the most uncompromising and finest honour that it had ever pleased Divine Providence to place upon the throne." (*ib.* 365.)

REIGN IV: QUEEN VICTORIA

CHAPTER I

Queen Victoria, Baron Stockmar, and King Leopold

In approaching the reign of Queen Victoria, in pursuance of an impartial inquiry into the practical working of our constitutional system, one is met at the threshold by the feeling that the ground is one which veneration for the Queen's character and life has made almost sacred for all who lived during any part of her reign. But the matter here of interest is not the personality of the Queen so much as the political system which it was her lot to illustrate. No one was more anxious than herself that the full glare of truth should light up all the incidents and secrets of her reign; as shown by the sanction she gave to the publication of Sir Theodore Martin's Life of the Prince Consort. She regarded her reign as a political experiment, about which she was anxious to gratify the curiosity of posterity, and since her death still more light has been thrown on her reign by the three volumes of her correspondence published by Lord Esher and Mr. A. C. Benson in 1907. But, grateful as we must be for these volumes, they only carry us to the end of 1861, and they are only selections from some five or six hundred volumes which the Queen and Prince had compiled to that period. And though they contain many letters between the Queen and Lord John Russell, they draw nothing from a set of volumes containing the Queen's letters to that statesman. But in any case the published letters supply sufficient material for all practical purposes of study.

On the Queen's accession, her uncle King Leopold of Belgium, whom Lord Beaconsfield once described as "the

wisest and most accomplished of living princes" (*Speeches*, ii. 26), recommended her to study for the next few years under Baron Stockmar, than whom few living men possessed more general information, and who might be regarded as "a living dictionary of all matters scientific and politic that happened these thirty years." She would thus have him constantly near her without anybody having the right of finding fault with it. (*Letters*, i. 105, 106, June 30, 1837.)

So Baron Stockmar, once private physician to King Leopold and later his secretary, at the age of forty-nine came to the British Court, where for fifteen months he held an unofficial position as the Queen's chief adviser. And when in the winter of 1838 it was a question of a travelling companion and tutor for Prince Albert, then nineteen, it was with Stockmar that the Queen and her uncle arranged that he should go to Italy. At that age, as with most of us, the Prince was singularly apathetic about politics; Stockmar complaining that he would read no newspapers even about the most important events, whilst for foreign ones he had a perfect horror. It was not a promising beginning for a youth who, two years later, on February 10, 1840, was destined to become the husband of our English Queen. But so well did the Baron use his opportunities to write what he liked on the Prince's unformed mind that we find the Prince within a few months of his marriage offering his views and advice to Lord Melbourne, then Prime Minister. "Victoria," so he wrote to his father in August 1840, "allows me to take much part in foreign affairs, and I think I have already done some good. I always commit my views to paper, and then communicate them to Lord Melbourne. He seldom answers me, but I have the satisfaction of seeing him act entirely in accordance with what I have said." (Stockmar, *Memoirs*, ii. 493.) And considering that in the autumn of that year our treaty with Austria, Prussia, and Russia all but brought us to war with France, Stockmar's pupil must have made astonishing progress between the ages of nineteen and twenty-one. Indeed, Stockmar in 1843 vouched for his quickness in seizing important points in any matter; "he drives his talons into it, like a vulture into its prey, and flies off with it to his nest." (*ib.* ii. 100.)

So it was not without justice that Lord Liverpool, writing to the Baron on October 7, 1841, told him he "might be truly said to be a species of second parent to the Queen and the Prince." (*Letters*, i. 430.) And happily the Baron was a man of whom Lord Melbourne could write to the Queen that he was "one of the soundest and coolest judgments that Lord Melbourne had ever met with," though he did suffer from "a settled weakness of the stomach, the seat of health, strength, thought, and life": which reminded him of the story that Napoleon lost the battle of Leipsic by reason of some greasy soup he had eaten the day before. (*ib.* i. 492, April 6, 1842.)

When the Prince of Wales was born in November 1841, it was at Stockmar's advice that King Frederic William IV. of Prussia was invited to be a godfather to the future King of England: which sets one wondering whether the Prussian King's favourite idea of anglicanising the Church of Prussia by the aid of Bunsen and the Archbishop of Canterbury would, if successful, have averted the disastrous quarrel of 1914. Stockmar's opinion was that only through and with England could Germany hope to realise the influence she aspired to over the affairs of the world; there being then a traditional desire on the part of the English Cabinet to rest their policy on Germany as likely to be a better ally than any other Power for the preservation of the peace of the world. (*Memoirs*, ii. 335, November 12, 1848.) Writing in March 1854, at the time of the Crimean War, the Baron wished above all things that Prussia and Austria should join with England against Russia, the object of the war being to check that preponderance of Russia which she had asserted more and more during the last thirty years. This Anglo-German anti-Russian alliance was the political idea "to forward which in the last forty years I have not let the least of my opportunities pass by unimproved and to which in the year 1846 I had won my late friend Peel." (*ib.* ii. 522, 523.) In this alliance Stockmar was doomed to disappointment. Nothing would induce King Frederic William IV. of Prussia to join in a war against his brother-in-law of Russia. Not even the Queen's reproachful letter of March 17, 1854, in which she taunted him with using language which, however

suitable to a King of Hanover or Saxony, was unworthy of a Great Power like Prussia, had any effect. And among other causes of Prussia's determined neutrality was a rather curious one. Lord Malmesbury's story is that Baron Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador in London, frightened the King from joining the allies by sending him a plan of England and France for the partition of his territory. (*Memoirs*, ii. 429, March 23, 1854.) But, whatever the truth of this story, Stockmar failed of his Anglo-German alliance.

Certainly not the least of his opportunities had been the golden one of his influence on the Prince Consort and on the Queen ; and the whole of the Queen's reign was coloured by the Baron's Russophobism. Bunsen, in a letter of May 15, 1848, described Stockmar as " one of the first politicians of Germany and of Europe," and as " the silent guide of the Court of Great Britain." (*ib.* ii. 260.) The young Queen and her young Consort were like clay in the hands of this clever potter, who was always flitting to and fro between the English Court and the Continent. In 1841, when the Ministry of Lord Melbourne was tottering to its fall, Stockmar received messages more and more pressing from the English Court to return to London. " Why are you not here," wrote the Prince imploringly. So back he came early in September, the Government having fallen on August 30. (*ib.* ii. 49.)

With Peel, Lord Melbourne's successor, Stockmar had long negotiations on the re-establishment of the constitutional authority of the Queen, and on the position of the Prince. He rightly regarded it as a gap in our Constitution that it was silent as to the place and rights and duties of a Prince Consort, and he wished for these to be defined in an Act of Parliament. And such an Act would, he thought, render unnecessary the Queen's wish expressed in December 1841 for conferring on the Prince the title of King. Peel, however, resisted both suggestions from fear of Parliamentary opposition. But the Prince became thenceforth the Queen's private secretary and counsellor, taking part in all affairs affecting the Crown, and being present, as he had not been under Melbourne, at all the audiences she had with her Ministers. (*ib.* ii. 494.) As he described himself on April 6, 1850, in a letter to the Duke of Wellington, he became the Queen's

" sole confidential adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of the Government, her private secretary and permanent Minister." (Martin's *Prince Consort*, i. 74, ii. 260.) Nice and natural as this was, it was calculated to place the real Prime Minister often in a difficult position. And so the Prince's position remained for the next fourteen years, through several changes of Ministry, and with no apparent friction. A month before William IV. died, the Queen's uncle, King Leopold of Belgium, had sent Stockmar to train the future Queen Victoria in sound constitutional principles, nor could he have sent a better tutor, who was also, in the words of Sir Theodore Martin, "the mental foster-father" of her future consort. Stockmar's advice to the Queen and Prince was uniformly discreet, as when he opposed the Queen's desire in 1841 for the Prince to have the title of King Consort. His idea of the political attitude of the Crown was a strict and exalted neutrality, and it was due to the success with which he inculcated this idea that the Queen was able to write to King Leopold on October 29, 1844, that " they say no Sovereign was ever more beloved than I am " (*Letters*, i. 243) ; that Peel was able to say in 1845 that monarchy had never stood so well in England before (*ib.* i. 259) ; and that the Prince could write to Stockmar on May 18, 1848, that " Monarchy never stood higher in England than it does at present." (*ib.* ii. 49.)

The Baron's political reading of the wording of the English Constitution is given in the long letter he wrote to the Prince on January 22, 1854, at the time when the whole Press had made a dead set at the Prince for his alleged unconstitutional position and actions, and when, as he put it himself, " the stupidest trash was babbled to the public, so stupid that (as they say in Coburg) you would not give it to the pigs to litter in." (*Martin*, ii. 535, December 27, 1853.) The letter well serves to indicate the curious political philosophy the Baron had instilled into the Queen and her Consort since the beginning of their close intimacy.

The position of the Throne, so held Stockmar, had fallen more and more into obscurity, and since 1830 had been in constant danger of becoming a pure Ministerial Government. Ministers, from sheer want of goodwill, had neglected their

duty of protecting the Royal prerogative. Since the old pre-Reform Tories had died out, the modern ones had become "simply degenerate bastards," whilst the Whigs stood to the Throne as the wolf to the lamb. Pushing to an extreme the dangerous constitutional fiction which prohibited the use of the Sovereign's name in debates on constitutional matters, and being suffered to do so by the Crown, they were impressing the public with the belief that the King in law was nothing but a mandarin figure, compelled to nod or shake its head in assent or denial as his Ministers pleased. Since, then, these politicians of the Aberdeen school treated the existing Constitution merely as a bridge to a Republic, it was most important to countenance such a fiction only provisionally, and to let no opportunity slip of vindicating the legitimate position of the Crown. This could best be done by placing the Royal prerogative no higher than the right of the King to be permanent President of his Ministerial Council. The most stupid of Englishmen knew that his country was always governed by one party, and that the Premier was only the chief of that party, and as such was always tempted to place the transitory interests of his party above the more substantial ones of his country.

"The twaddle about Ministers being responsible to the nation for every fault of head or heart" would not keep matters straight; for the responsible Minister might do the most stupid and mischievous things, and yet come to no worse punishment than resignation or dismissal. Only the Sovereign, free from party passion, could avert such evils, by the exercise of an independent judgment. It was for the Sovereign, as able, as accomplished, as patriotic as his Ministers, to take a part in the initiation and maturing of Government measures. The Sovereign should thus act as "a permanent Premier, who takes rank above the temporary head of the Cabinet, and in matters of discipline exercises supreme authority."

The sixteen years of the Queen's reign had proved to Stockmar the extreme value of the moral purity of the Sovereign, "as an example to the people, as moral oil for the driving-wheels of the Constitutional machine." That machine only worked smoothly when the Sovereign was

upright and truthful, whereas, when he had been insincere, mendacious, and wicked (as in the case of George IV. and William IV.), it had creaked and fouled, and jolted till within an ace of coming to a deadlock. His desire to see its stability secured was because in his eyes "the English Constitution was the foundation, corner and cope-stone of all the political civilisation of the human race, present and to come." But to maintain the balance of the Constitution, it was necessary to throw the popularity of the Sovereign into the scale against the weight and pressure of the democratic element, which had become preponderant since the Reform Act. It should be the Minister's first duty to defend the Sovereign's deserved popularity, whilst it should be the Prince's to lend all the aid in his power "towards the assumption by the Lords of their right position in the Legislature." (*Martin*, ii. 545–7.)

The only flaw in this theory of the Sovereign as a permanent non-partisan President is the same that applies to a similar theory of the non-partisan function of the House of Lords, namely, the obvious incompatibility with human nature of such a non-partisan attitude on the part of either the Crown or the Peerage. Except in matters indifferent, the Crown is bound to lean to one party or the other. The Queen's grandfather and her two uncles had all been strongly partisan, nor, with the best will in the world, could the Queen always steer clear of the same tendency. Also, a political system which depended so much for success on the moral character of the Sovereign was obviously one which could never have any security beyond the life of the reigning Sovereign.

In any case, the Prince's adoption in theory and practice of this latter idea had the result which Stockmar expected and desired. It raised the prestige of the Crown to a height that would have seemed impossible between 1820 and 1837.

At bottom Stockmar's love for the British Constitution resolved itself into love for monarchical influence. On December 27, 1845, he wrote to the Prince that he had never been able to discover that balance of the elements of their Constitution of which Englishmen made such boast. He regretted that Peel had done nothing to strengthen the monarchical element; the most that could be said of him was

that he had not helped to make Monarchy weaker than it was when handed over to him by Melbourne. Since 1830, the executive power had been entirely in the hands of the Ministry, and these had been more the servants of Parliament —practically of the House of Commons—than of the Crown ; and this was a distortion of the fundamental idea of the British Constitution. He was all for " the right of the Crown to assert itself as permanent head of the Council over the temporary leader of the Ministry." (*Martin*, i. 313–5.) To which the Prince replied on January 6, 1846, that to his mind the " exaltation of Royalty was possible only through the personal character of the Sovereign." (*ib.* i. 316.)

Nothing could have been finer than Stockmar's counsel to the Prince on September 27, 1847, when he wrote : " Consider politics only as the means of doing service as far as in you lies to the whole human race " (*ib.* i. 435) ; counsel which bore fruit in the Prince's conception of the first great International Exhibition, referring to which in his speech at the Mansion House on March 21, 1850, he alluded to " that great end to which indeed all history pointed—the realisation of the unity of mankind." (*ib.* ii. 247.) This may be taken as the earliest recognition of that cosmopolitan feeling which affords the chief hope for the ultimate pacification of the world. But though the Baron reached these nobler political ideals, his influence, as regards English politics, ran counter to the natural line of political development. Though convinced that England had no wish for a Republic, and that Constitutional Monarchy was more popular than ever, he deplored the movement of the House of Commons towards another form of Government under the forms of the Constitution, and longed for a series of able statesmen to resist it. (*Memoirs*, ii. 448.) He complained that since the Reform Bill there had been so great a scarcity of able English statesmen, who could withstand the tendency of the House of Commons to become omnipotent at the expense of the Executive. " I don't care a straw," he wrote, " for Whigs and Tories, and their respective miserable party interests and feelings." (*ib.* ii. 446.) Again : " This English mania of making all political wisdom to consist in the art of satisfying Parliament and of tricking it by means of clever speeches makes me sick."

(*ib.* ii. 450.) Such ideas were hardly safe ones to instil into the minds of the Queen and her Consort; and it is to the credit of both that they never led to disaster.

But it was in the field of foreign politics that the Baron more especially sought a controlling influence over the Royal pair. For forty years, from 1814 to 1854, his dream had been of that Anglo-German alliance for which he had let slip no opportunity. To this idea he boasted of having made a convert of Peel, who in a letter of March 1848 wrote: "I have always been a warm adherent of an alliance with Germany." (*ib.* ii. 426.) Lord Palmerston, on the other hand, leant more to an alliance with France, at least after 1852, as he was "afraid of the German love of conquest." (*ib.* ii. 339.) And the Duke of Argyll's evidence is that "Palmerston hated Prussia, and had the worst opinion of the motives of Prussian statesmen. They were playing a game for the hegemony of Germany, and not at all for the establishment of constitutional liberty among the German people." For this reason he was hated in return by the German Unionists (*Autobiography*, i. 333), including doubtless Stockmar himself, who did not scruple to think Palmerston mad.

This fundamental difference came to a head after Palmerston's approval of the *coup d'état* of Louis Bonaparte in December 1851, when the Prince, as Stockmar says, "stood up for the right of supervision and control belonging to the Crown in foreign policy." (*Memoirs*, ii. 458.) Stockmar could only ascribe Palmerston's action to insanity, and he declared that since November he had thought "the man had been for some time insane." On December 22, 1851, he wrote: "Ever since I returned here, therefore, for the last two months, he has been guilty of follies which confirm me more and more in my opinion that he is not quite right in his mind." (*ib.* ii. 458.) This of the Foreign Minister of England!

No wonder that with "the silent guide of the English Court" instilling such notions of the Foreign Minister into the Royal mind, the relations between the Court and Palmerston had been to the last degree lacking in harmony. For this Palmerston was himself partly to blame, but something must be put down to the secret influence behind the Throne

and between the Throne and the Ministry: an influence which, however more beneficial, was more operative than it had been since the days of Lord Bute.

The situation reached a climax in December 1853, when the Crimean War was about to begin. Palmerston resigned the Home Office on December 16, only to resume it on December 26. But the destruction by the Russians of the Turkish fleet at Sinope roused public indignation to white heat. The whole Press attacked the Prince, who wrote to Stockmar in December 23: "The state of politics have been quite insane. . . . The defeat of the Turks at Sinope has made the people furious . . . one almost fancies oneself in a lunatic asylum." (*Martin*, ii. 533.) It was a time "when we might fancy we were living in a madhouse," he wrote on January 24, 1854. But this idea of the public as "quite mad" (*Letters*, ii. 574) was not confined to the Prince. For the Duke of Argyll, belonging to the Cabinet, wrote of the agitation in the country as amounting to "a frenzy," which had seized all classes, all ranks, and all parties. "Bad suspicions of everybody who was supposed to be in favour of peace were among the dangerous symptoms of the time." (*Autobiography*, i. 459.) Among the foremost victims of the public wrath was the Prince, who was attacked for his correspondence with foreign courts, for his interference with the army, for his dislike of Palmerston. The Prince went very candidly into the causes of this storm of unpopularity. The old High Tory or Protectionist party disliked him for his past friendship with Peel, and for the success of the Exhibition. The army bore him a grudge; Lord Raglan and his following had never forgiven him for having promoted Lord Hardinge, instead of Lord Raglan, to be Commander-in-Chief. And the public had suddenly awoke to the fact that he had for years taken an active interest in all political matters. To such a height did the excitement run that, as the Prince wrote, "My being committed to the Tower was believed all over the country, nay, even that the Queen had been arrested. People surrounded the Tower in thousands to see us brought to it." (*Martin*, ii. 562.) It was a time when apparently every one thought every one mad but himself.

To enhance the power of the Crown, to strengthen the Executive at the cost of the Legislature, was the great idea with which Stockmar imbued the Queen. And King Leopold's advice to his niece coincided with Stockmar's. As early in her reign as January 16, 1838, he begged her to consult with Lord Melbourne "on the subject of what ought to be done to keep for the Crown the little influence it still may possess." "The Sovereign," he said, "should be constantly occupied in preserving the elements by which monarchy was carried on, or, should they have been too much weakened by untoward circumstances, to contrive by every means to *strengthen them again.*" "The Queen," he added, "was too clever not to know that the being called Queen or King was not of the least consequence, unless those titles carried the power indispensable for their use." (*Letters*, i. 134.) Later, on January 15, 1847, he professed himself astounded by the change effected by the French Revolution of July 1830; for whilst in France only the dynasty was changed, in England *the very spirit of the old Monarchy had been abolished.* (*ib.* ii. 138.) It is evident that these ideas had as much influence on the Queen as the identical ones held by Stockmar had on the Prince. Both wished to revive the spirit of the old Monarchy.

The whole of the Queen's reign bore the marks of this early training. Much as she loved her country, she loved the Monarchy more. Much as she may have believed in the wisdom of Parliament, she believed more strongly in her personal direction of it. Such was her veneration for Charles I. the Royal Martyr, that she preserved all the relics she could collect of the Stuart family with a sort of adoration. (*Quarterly Review*, cxciii. 335.) And such was her dislike for Cromwell, and so little could she bear the word Commonwealth, that, when the Australian Commonwealth Bill was about to pass, she avowed her misgivings about the word and suggested Dominion instead. (Sir S. Lee's *Victoria*, 529, 530.) She accepted, rather than assented to, representative Government, and was sustained in the glorious devotion of her life to the cares of the State by the conviction that such devotion was indispensable to its safety. As the writer in the *Quarterly* wrote in April 1901: "She was really per-

suaded that all the institutions of the country would crumble if her orders were not carried out to the letter and to the instant. Very few people knew how superbly she continued to stand sentry to the business of her Empire. She never relapsed her hold, she never withdrew under the excuse of sorrow or weakness or old age." And happily also "in small things as in great the Queen never believed that she was or could be wrong on a matter of principle."

CHAPTER II

Early Victorian Politics

Notwithstanding the popularity of the Queen at her accession, a certain cooling in ardour of men's loyalty was indicated by the difference between the sum of £230,000, which Parliament had voted for the Coronation of George IV., and the £70,000 which it voted for that of Queen Victoria. The two previous reigns had undoubtedly produced a strong republican feeling, such as was reflected in the Letter to the Queen on the State of the Monarchy which some unknown writer falsely ascribed to the paternity of Lord Brougham. In the outer political world there was much turmoil of thought, which was reflected within the walls of Parliament itself. Scenes there were frequent, and indeed had become more frequent since the passing of the great Reform Bill of 1832. Greville declares that in the golden days prior to Reform nothing was ever heard in the House of Commons but coughs or cheers, whereas, since then it had been nothing but shouts, and hootings and groans and noises the most discordant that the human voice could emit, accompanied by the beating of sticks and feet on the floor. (iii. 250.) Of a two days' debate he wrote on December 8, 1837: "It is said that such a scene of disorder, and such a bear-garden, never was beheld. The noise and confusion was so great that the proceedings could hardly be heard and understood"; the Speaker being even driven to a threat of resignation. (iv. 32.) Again, on February 27, 1838: "The scene which ensued appears to have been something like that which a meeting of Bedlam or Billingsgate might produce." (iv. 71.) The state of things was hardly one to impress the new Sovereign with an exalted idea of democracy or of representative government.

Meantime, the faithful Melbourne spent month after

month at Court, driving Greville to wonder how he could have been tempted to exchange the good talk of Holland House for "the trivial, laboured, and wearied inanities of the Royal circle." (*Greville*, iv. 154.) And the apathy of the Prime Minister seemed to have a sobering effect on the country; for on March 25, 1839, Greville wrote: "The great characteristic of the present time is indifference; nobody appears to care for anything; nobody cares for the Queen; her popularity has sunk to zero, and loyalty is a dead letter; nobody cares for the Government or for any man or set of men." (*ib.* iv. 103, 104.)

But a storm soon ruffled this placid sea; for when on May 1839 Lord Melbourne was defeated by 294 to 289 on the Jamaica Bill, the Queen wrote that she had been unable to touch a morsel of food that evening nor the next morning. (*Letters*, i. 197, May 8, 1839.) When it came to actual resignation the Queen in her interview with Lord John Russell was "all the time dissolved in tears." (*Greville*, iv. 206.) But the trouble was shortlived, for Sir Robert Peel at once came into collision with the Queen on the question of dismissing the Ladies of the Royal Household. A letter from her to Melbourne about her interview with Peel was shown to the Cabinet: "Do not fear," she said, "that I was not calm and collected. They wanted to deprive me of my Ladies, and I suppose they would deprive me next of my dressers and housemaids; they wished to treat me like a girl, but I will show them that I am Queen of England." So, at least, says Greville (iv. 209); but her letter of May 9, in her published letters, runs rather differently: "I was calm but very decided, and I think you would have been pleased to see my composure and great firmness; the Queen of England will not submit to such trickery." (*Letters*, i. 305.) Not a word about dressers or housemaids; yet it is not likely that she wrote two letters on the same subject to the same man about the same event. Clearly Greville must be taken with due allowance for a love of colour. It is well known in later years that the Queen intimated that her action had been wrong and hasty (*ib.* i. 211 *note*); but her non-compliance with Peel's perfectly constitutional request met with the hearty approval of her uncle, who wrote on May 17 that he *approved very highly of*

the whole mode of her procedure, and that, as Peel had been forced upon her, she was under no obligation to show him the mark of confidence he had asked of her before taking office. (*ib.* i. 221.)

Thus the Queen, with the best non-party intentions, was driven by circumstances into a strong partisan attitude. Writing to her uncle on June 19, 1837, when William IV. was dying, the future Queen had declared: "I *never showed* myself, *openly*, to belong to *any party*, and I *do not* belong to any party"; and by this rule of political correctitude she always tried to steer her difficult course. But the task lay beyond the bounds of human nature; and she began her reign with a great dislike of the Tories, which they handsomely reciprocated. Greville remarks on September 5, 1839, as "among the bad signs of the times the decay of loyalty in the Tory party" (which was his own). "No Opposition was ever more rabid than this is, no people ever treated or spoke of the Sovereign with such marked disrespect. They seem not to care one straw for the Crown, its dignity, or its authority, because the head on which it is placed does not nod with benignity to them." (iv. 246.) "Do what one will, nothing will please these Tories," the Queen wrote on December 6, 1839 (*Letters*, i. 257), and on December 26, 1839: "As to the Tories, I am still raging; they abuse and grumble incessantly in the most incredible manner." (*ib.* i. 262.) "The Tories really are very astonishing," she wrote to Prince Albert on January 21, 1840; "as they cannot and dare not attack us in Parliament, they do everything that they can to be personally rude to me. . . . The Whigs are the only safe and loyal people, and the Radicals will also rally round their Queen to protect her from the Tories; but it is a curious sight to see those who, as Tories, used to pique themselves upon their excessive loyalty, doing everything to degrade their young Sovereign in the eyes of the people." (*ib.* i. 268.)

And the Tories met the Queen with equal hostility. Greville describes Bradshaw's speech at Canterbury in November 1839 as "a personal attack of the most violent and indecent kind upon the Queen." It was received with shouts of applause at a Conservative dinner (iv. 252), and

was followed elsewhere by similar "rabid and disloyal effusions." The Tories, he said, were "ready to roll the Crown in the dust and trample it under their feet." (*ib.* iv. 253.)

This was not a promising beginning for a non-partisan reign, nor was the difficulty lessened by the Queen's strong personal liking for Melbourne and her equally strong aversion to Peel. She told Melbourne that the latter's embarrassed manner conveyed itself to her, and she felt she could never get over it. (*Letters*, i. 384.) "He is such a cold, odd man, she can't make out what he means," she wrote to Melbourne on May 8, 1839. (*ib.* i. 200.)

When, therefore, on May 24, 1841, a majority of one on a vote of confidence brought Lord Melbourne's Government to an end, and brought in Peel, all her grievances recurred in an acute form to her recollection.

The remembrance of Peel's demand for a change in the Ladies of her Bedchamber, which had led to his failure to form a Government in 1839, naturally still harassed her; nor could she forgive the Tories for the part they had played in 1840, when in conjunction with the Radicals they had reduced the proposed annuity to the Prince from £50,000 to £30,000, in accordance with Greville's opinion that £50,000 a year for pocket-money was "quite monstrous." (iv. 267.) The intimation by Lord John Russell of Peel's possibly proposing an increased grant she met by the reply that she "would never allow such a thing to be proposed, and that it would be a disgrace to owe any favour to that party." (*Letters*, i. 375.) She expressed herself in a similar sense to Mr. Anson on October 5, 1841, saying that Peel now probably regretted his opposition to the grant originally proposed, "but it was, and was intended to be, a personal insult to herself, and it was followed up by opposition to her private wishes in the precedency question, where the Duke of Wellington took the lead against her wishes, as Peel had done in the Commons against the Prince's grant. She never could forget it, and no favour to her should come from such a quarter." (*ib.* i. 426.) In the same spirit she told the Prince that after the manner in which the Tories had treated him in that matter "he ought now to keep them at a

distance." (*ib.* i. 382.) So, although Lord Melbourne had advised the Queen, on August 30, 1841, that she should see Peel more often than the once a week that had sufficed for himself and William IV., we find her thus describing the situation to her uncle on September 24, 1841, "I own I am much happier when I need *not* see the Ministers; luckily they do not want to see me often." (*ib.* i. 416.)

But Melbourne she had seen far more frequently than once a week. For to her Uncle Leopold she wrote of her lost Minister on September 8, 1841: "After seeing him for four years, with very few exceptions—*daily*—you may imagine that I *must* feel the change; and the longer the time gets since we parted, the *more* I feel it. *Eleven days* was the *longest* I ever was without seeing him." (*ib.* i. 402.) Only her home and the Prince afforded her any consolation. (*ib.* i. 400.) "What the Queen felt," she wrote to Lord Melbourne on August 30, 1841, "when she parted from her dear, kind friend, Lord Melbourne, is better imagined than described; she was dreadfully affected for some time after, but is calm now." (*ib.* i. 390.)

The situation was obviously one of some constitutional danger, of which Melbourne himself was fully conscious. For his promise to write to the Queen, whenever she wished, as arranged by the Prince to her great relief (*ib.* i. 382), would expose him to be always suspected of secret intercourse and intrigue, as Lord Bute had been in the early years of George III. (*ib.* i. 384.) It was difficult for such correspondence to keep off political ground, and Stockmar's sagacity was never better shown than in perceiving and warning against the danger. "As long," he wrote on October 6, 1841, "as the secret communication exists between Her Majesty and Lord Melbourne, this ground, upon which alone Sir Robert could obtain the position necessary to him as Premier, must remain cut away from under his feet. I hold, therefore, this secret interchange an *essential injustice* to Sir Robert's present situation . . . a continued correspondence of that sort must be fraught with imminent danger to the Queen, especially to Lord Melbourne and to the State." (*ib.* i. 427.) He warned Melbourne that "it would be impossible to carry on this secret commerce with

the Sovereign for any length of time without exposing the Queen's character and creating mighty embarrassments in the quiet and regular working of a Constitutional machine." (*Letters*, i. 443.) But despite the Baron's remonstrance the correspondence continued, with the consequence foreseen, that it naturally excited the jealousy of Peel, who at an interview with Stockmar said: "On this I must insist, and I do assure you, that that moment I was to learn that the Queen takes advice upon public matters in another place, I shall throw up; for such a thing I conceive the country could not stand, and I would not remain an hour, whatever the consequences of my resignation may be." (*ib.* i. 454.) At the end of the year, Anson, the Prince's secretary, noted that Melbourne had taken no notice of the Baron's remonstrance, though the correspondence continued with diminished vigour. The Queen also interested herself less and less about politics, and either grew to like her Tory Ministers more or to dislike them less. (*ib.* i. 463.)

It was fortunate, therefore, that at such a juncture the Prince was in a position to step more or less into the position vacated by the lamented Melbourne. Till that time the Prince had not been present at Council meetings, and had been kept in the political background. At the Prince's instigation Lord Melbourne, in taking leave of the Queen, intimated to her that the Prince was his natural successor in the matter of counsel and advice; repeating in writing his high opinion of the Prince's judgment, temper, and discretion, and strongly urging reliance in future on the Prince's advice in the place of his own. (*ib.* i. 383, 385.) Thus the Prince slipped into the position which should more correctly have been Peel's, and happily he soon found in Peel so congenial a spirit that after two years Greville could write on November 25, 1843: "The Queen cares really for no one but her husband. The Tories have fast hold of him, and through him of her, and this provokes the Whigs to death." (v. 216.) So all luckily came right in circumstances for which the Constitution had made no provision.

From that time the Prince's power in the State increased enormously, and a distinctly more imperious note is dis-

cernible in the political letters inspired or composed by him for the Queen. On September 7, 1841, Peel was bidden to instruct the Lord Chamberlain to be "very particular in always naming to the Queen any appointment he wished to make in his department, and always to take her pleasure upon an appointment before he settled on them; this was a point on which the Queen had always laid great stress." On September 9, 1841, the Prime Minister was reproached through Anson for not having informed the Queen of the adjournment of the House of Commons, but having left her to see it first in the papers. She also required that a short report of the debates in the Commons should always be sent to her from himself, and of those in the Lords from the Duke of Wellington. (*Letters*, i. 405.) She insisted in future on always being informed beforehand of any proposed political appointment, so that she might discuss it fully with her Ministers. (*ib.* i. 406.)

Early in 1842 Peel consented to apprise the Prince, from time to time, of the measures contemplated by the Government, and to give in detail any explanations the Queen desired. (*ib.* i. 479.)

On October 25, 1841, the following extract from a letter to Peel indicates the firmer hand: "The Queen saw in the papers that Lord Stuart de Rothesay is already gone. The Queen can hardly believe this, as no Ambassador or Minister *ever* left England without previously asking for an Audience and receiving one, as the Queen wishes always to see them before they repair to their posts. Would Sir Robert be so very good as to ask Lord Aberdeen (Foreign Secretary) whether Lord Stuart de Rothesay is gone or not, and, if he should be, to tell Lord Aberdeen that in future she would wish him always to inform her when they intend to go, and to ask for an Audience, which, if the Queen is well, she would always grant." (*ib.* i. 442.)

And there was a tendency for this more dominant attitude of the Crown to extend outside its rightful province; as shown when the Queen sent to Peel, for approval, a letter to Lord Ellenborough on questions affecting India, to which Peel replied that "these being matters of important public concern, the regular and constitutional

channel for conveying the opinion of Your Majesty with respect to them would be through Your Majesty's servants." (*Letters*, i. 629.)

It was inevitable that the Prince's great ability and industry, and interest in politics, should make him more and more a power in the State, though constitutionally he had no political position. But the steps to power were so gradual as to be almost imperceptible; a more definite stage being reached when in the political crisis of December 1845 Lord Lansdowne and Lord John Russell on their visit to Windsor were received not by the Queen alone, as previously Ministers had been received, but by the Prince also; the Royal language being no longer "I" but "*We*," so that Greville wrote of the Prince, "He is King to all intents and purposes." (v. 329, 330.)

The letters that passed between the Queen and her uncle lend a special charm of humour to the published letters of the Queen. But they did not pass without some searchings of heart; for the Queen had actually to assure the King that their letters were never opened at the Foreign Office. Lord Palmerston's denial of such a thing was most indignant, when asked by the Queen about it. She therefore could write: "My letters are *quite safe*, and all those to Germany, which are of any *real* consequence. I also send through Rothschild, which is perfectly *safe* and very quick." (June 6, 1841, *Letters*, i. 364.) It was as if the Queen had been an alien in her own country.

But obviously such letters could hardly be entirely non-political. The uncle could not fail to influence his niece. Some months before her accession he pressed upon her "the necessity of maintaining the influence of Conservative principles, and of protecting the Church." He bade her to miss no opportunity of showing her sincere feeling for the existing Church. (*ib.* i. 94.) She could not say too much about the Church, without pledging herself to anything in particular. (*ib.* i. 102.) And before she decided on anything of importance, he begged her to consult himself. (June 27, 1837, *ib.* i. 102.)

All this was sound worldly wisdom, but it was foreign influence. Yet the Queen, whilst respecting the Church,

had no superstitious regard for it. When Lord Ashley's resolution against the Sunday delivery of letters threatened to become law, she told Lord John Russell that she could consent only most reluctantly to such a measure: she thought it "a very *false* notion of obeying God's will to do what will be the cause of much annoyance and possibly of great distress to private families." (June 9, 1850, *ib.* ii. 290.) And when in August 1854 the Archbishop of Canterbury wished for a special prayer against the cholera, she wrote strongly to Lord Aberdeen against it, reminding him that in 1837 the much more fatal visitation of influenza had been accorded no such prayer for its removal. (August 21, 1854, *ib.* iii. 51.)

When on March 8, 1850, the Privy Council gave judgment, much to the indignation of the High Church party, against the Bishop of Exeter, who had refused to institute Mr. Gorham to a Crown living in his diocese on account of his heretical views about baptism, Lord Beaconsfield remarked in a letter of April 20: "Gracious Majesty much excited, and clapped her hands with joy, when the critical decision of the Privy Council against the Bishop of Exeter was announced to her." (*Life*, iii. 248.)

It was indeed fortunate that for sixty years the throne was occupied by a Sovereign so singularly free from religious bigotry as the Queen. Perhaps something of this was due to Stockmar, who in his memorandum on the education of the Prince of Wales, addressed to the Royal parents on July 28, 1846, gave this remarkable advice: "Above all attainments the Prince should be trained to freedom of thought." (*Martin*, ii. 184.) One of the functions of royalty which she disliked most was that of the hand-kissing of newly appointed bishops. (*Lee*, 392.) In all these matters she steered the course of the golden mean, and it is recorded that Lady Canning's attempt to convert her to High Church views roused in her high indignation. She agreed with Palmerston that bishops of moderate opinions, "not leaning too much to either side," were best; for "extreme opinions lead to mischief in the end, and produce much discord in the Church, which it would be advisable to avoid." (*Letters*,

iii. 288.) She avowed herself "anxious to remove any impression of the Church patronage running unduly towards party extremes." (*ib.* iii. 267.) And to this temperate line she was consistent throughout; for about bishops she wrote to Archbishop Benson in 1890, that "the men to be chosen must not be taken with reference to satisfying one or the other party in the Church, or with reference to any political party, but for their real worth. We want people who can be firm and conciliatory, else the Church cannot be maintained. We want large broad views, or the difficulties will be unsurmountable." (*Lee*, 393.) And she kept firm hold of appointments, often insisting on other arrangements than those proposed by her Ministers, as when in 1868 she overruled Mr. Disraeli's wish for a certain Archbishop of Canterbury by appointing Tait to that position. But in this matter of preferment it was to Dean Wellesley of Windsor on whose judgment she almost implicitly relied for guidance.

Till the Irish Church question in 1868, nothing but the Hampden controversy in 1847 seriously roused the Queen's interest. During that controversy Greville was told by the Duke of Bedford that both the Queen and the Prince were in a state of hot zeal, and that the Prince wrote daily to Lord John Russell, imploring him to prosecute Dean Merewether: which Lord John was too wise to do. (vi. 118, January 7, 1848.)

But when the projected Disestablishment of the Irish Church had to be faced, after the General Election of 1868 had returned a Parliament with that intention in view, the Queen had a difficult part to play. She disliked Disestablishment as much as her grandfather had disliked Catholic Emancipation; she might have based her opposition on her Coronation Oath; but fortunately she played a wiser part. Before the new Parliament of 1869 met, she wrote Mr. Gladstone a letter which showed "much disturbance." (February 4, 1869, Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 260.) This the Prime Minister did his best to soothe. Then, at Bishop Magee's instigation, she pleaded for the intervention of the bench of English bishops, and practically made her preliminary consent dependent on the satisfaction of the Arch-

bishop of Canterbury. She strove to postpone the introduction of the measure till after March 1, to allow time for consultation with the Archbishop, thinking that "his position and character made it only right that such a measure should not be introduced without an opportunity being afforded to him of forming an opinion upon it, and communicating that opinion to the Government." (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, ii. 7.)

This was really to introduce a new principle into legislation, and to transfer to the Archbishop a sort of veto over Church legislation. But it proved a happy innovation; for Archbishop Tait at an interview found Gladstone's ideas about the Bill so much more in harmony with his own than he had expected that his opposition was disarmed. And when the Bill, after passing all its readings in the Commons during May, came before the Lords in June, it was the Queen's letter of June 4, 1869, to the Archbishop, urging moderation and the passing of the second reading, which averted a collision between the Houses; and when the danger of such collision reappeared over the question of amendments, and the Archbishop hinted at agitation for another year with a view to making better terms for the Irish Church, it was the Queen who put before him the wisdom of concessions and the possibility of further agitation resulting in worse rather than better terms. Even so the collision that was barely averted was "thanks to the Queen," as the Archbishop said; and considering that the Queen, as she wrote to Mr. Gladstone, never concealed how deeply she deplored the necessity of the measure, her resignation to it and her successful efforts for conciliation must ever mark the episode as one of the most noteworthy of her reign and most creditable to herself. (Davidson's *Tait*, ii. 24, 35, 42.)

This constant endeavour on the part of the Queen to oil the wheels of the political machinery, her tact in smoothing differences, her neutrality and self-effacement in regard to legislative measures, raised the Monarchy from the perilous position to which it had fallen in the days of her uncles, and justified her in writing to the King of the Belgians on January 28, 1845: "The feeling of loyalty in this country is happily *very* strong, and wherever we show ourselves we are most

heartily and warmly received." As an instance of the loyalty shown, she quotes the case of the "immensely proud" Duke of Buckingham, who, after dinner, himself brought to Prince Albert a cup of coffee on a waiter. (*Letters*, ii. 38.) Such a straw showed the monarchical direction of the wind.

But the waters were frequently troubled. Parliament was apt to be unruly, and the cause of constant anxiety.

"The House of Commons is becoming very unmanageable and troublesome," the Queen wrote to her uncle on July 2, 1850. This was Lord John Russell's Parliament, of which Greville, describing a scene on June 23, 1848, as "to the last degree deplorable and disgraceful," narrates how the members "roared and hooted and converted the House of Commons into such a bear-garden as no one ever saw before. . . . It was grief and scandal to all reasonable men." (vi. 201.) It was in this Parliament that the future Lord Beaconsfield was becoming prominent, of whom Greville said that his capacity was so great that he could not be cast aside, and his character so disreputable that he could not be trusted. (vi. 53, February 6, 1847.) Nor did Greville's opinion of him improve as time went on, for on February 25, 1850, he writes of him as having "nothing but the cleverness of an acrobat. Nobody has any confidence in him, or supposes he has any principles whatever." (vi. 392.) The Queen's favourite aversions, Greville says, were first and foremost Palmerston, and Disraeli next. (*ib.* vi. 398.)

Towards the end of 1850 came the Papal Aggression affair, causing a religious turmoil that might have been thought long since impossible. The Queen, while sanctioning the introduction into Parliament of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, resented strongly the "unchristian and intolerant spirit exhibited by many people at the public meetings": the violent abuse of the Catholic religion she could not bear to hear. (*Letters*, ii. 336.) It was this apple of religious discord that in February 1851, on the defeat of the Government, made it impossible to form that Coalition Government, with Lord Palmerston out of it, for which the Queen had

longed. "Alas! the hope of forming a strong Coalition Government has failed—*for the present*," she wrote on February 25, 1851. Statesmen who agreed about Papal Aggression differed about Protection, and so the Coalition, destined unfortunately to come into existence in 1852, was for the moment deferred.

Lord John Russell, called at one time "Finality John" for his insistence on the finality of the Reform Act of 1832, became, as time went on, the most strenuous advocate of further experiments in the enfranchisement of the people. The Queen never resisted such reform as her uncle William IV. had done, but she hardly disliked it less. The chief question to consider, she wrote to Lord John on December 3, 1851, was whether the strengthening of the Democratic principle would upset the balance of the Constitution, and further weaken the Executive, which was by no means too strong. (*ib.* ii. 403.) When the drafts of the proposed Reform came before her, she expressed herself as prepared to approve the measure on the strength of Lord John's approval. But she assumed that the Bill as approved by her would be adhered to in Parliament, and that the Prime Minister would not allow himself to be drawn on to further concessions to Democracy in the course of the debate, and that the introduction of the Ballot would be vigorously opposed. When a few days later she received the draft of Lord John's speech on the Bill she declared it differed so much from what had been originally submitted to her that she felt she ought not to sanction it without some explanation of the alteration: a fact which well shows how close and stringent is still the power of the Crown over the course of legislation. (*ib.* ii. 437.)

When on February 20, 1852, a coalition between the Protectionists and Lord Palmerston defeated Lord John Russell's Militia Bill, thereby bringing Lord Derby into power, the Queen described the new Cabinet as "a very sorry" one. (*ib.* ii. 450.) Greville, though a Conservative, was of the same opinion: "A more disgraceful and more degraded Government than this cannot be imagined," he wrote on July 7, 1852. (vi. 456.) He complained of Lord Derby's "extreme levity and incapacity for taking grave

and serious views," and condemned the general mistake of thinking him high-minded and chivalrous, arguing that, as he was not so in turf matters, he was unlikely to be so in politics. (vi. 456.) When at the end of the same year Lord Derby's Government fell, although the Elections in July had resulted in great Conservative gains, and Lord Aberdeen's Coalition Government took its place, Greville wrote of the Queen as "delighted to have got rid of her late Ministers; she felt, as everybody else, that their Government was disgraced by its shuffling and prevarication." She declared Harcourt's pamphlet on the Morality of Public Men to be a true description, and "as she is very honourable and true herself, it was natural she should disapprove their conduct." (vii. 32.) But alas for the vanity of human wishes! "The success of our excellent Aberdeen's arduous task and the formation of so brilliant and strong a Cabinet . . . the realisation of the country's and *our* most ardent wishes," was destined to result in the Crimean War; for most will now agree with the belief expressed by Lord Granville on February 19, 1887, that either Palmerston alone or Aberdeen alone would have prevented it. (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 97.) It was the coalition of the two different temperaments that made the war.

The rule of our Constitution that measures can only come before Parliament with the consent of the Crown, liable though such consent is to be extorted by a threat of resignation, has always proved a difficult barrier for liberal legislation, but an incident in 1845 revealed a danger to free discussion itself. On June 2, when the Duke of Wellington moved the second reading of the Bill to increase the grant to the Catholic College of Maynooth, the Duke of Newcastle, interrupting, asked him whether he had the Queen's leave to propose such a measure. Whereupon up rose Lord Brougham, and declared that he would not sit still and allow any one to deny the Peers' right "to enter into, continue, and close any discussion of any nature"; the leave of the Crown was only necessary in measures affecting the revenues and patrimonial interests of the Crown. Strange that such a right should have needed assertion. But the Queen was no enemy to the measure: about which she wrote to

her uncle on April 23, 1845, that "the *Catholics* are quite delighted at it—full of gratitude, and behave extremely well; but the Protestants behave shockingly, and display a narrow-mindedness and want of sense on the subject of religion which is quite a disgrace to the nation." (*Letters*, ii. 43.)

CHAPTER III

Queen Victoria's Foreign Policy

It was in the sphere of Foreign Affairs that the reign of Queen Victoria was of most interest constitutionally, because from the time of their marriage both she and the Prince made this their special province, partly in consequence of the close connection of both of them with Germany, and partly in consequence of the troubled state of Europe during the Prince's life and for ten years beyond it. King Leopold's advice to her on April 19, 1839 (*Letters*, i. 193), that she "ought to have weight and influence in the affairs of Europe," fell on willing ears, and Greville's remark on July 4, 1846, that "the Queen and Prince care more about foreign affairs than anything else" (v. 411), was true of her whole reign. So late as 1880, when the General Election had returned Gladstone to power and the new Prime Minister went nervously to his audience at Windsor, the Queen confined her political remarks to the hope that there would be no great change in the foreign policy of the country. (Rumbold's *Further Recollections*, 195.)

The Court thus came to claim a control over foreign policy by influence or advice far wider than the three preceding monarchs had ever dreamt of, with the result that successive Foreign Ministers found themselves confronted with two responsibilities, of which that to the Crown tended to override that to Parliament, and to bring about that impotence of Parliament over foreign policy which has now reached the stage of complete paralysis. Now for better, now for worse, a dual and often conflicting control was set up, and whilst in domestic affairs the Court bowed, however reluctantly, to the Cabinet, in foreign affairs its claim to a concurrent or even dominant power was the main political result of the Queen's reign.

The wisdom and tact displayed in the Queen's letters, their high international moral tone, their anxiety to avoid war and diminish friction, force on one the reflection that the judgment of an able man like the Prince, out of reach of the dust of the party arena, must often have been of great value to the State. But his judgment in 1846 lacked experience. He and the Queen were then only twenty-seven, whilst experience was all on the side of Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Secretary, who was then sixty-two. In the frequent conflicts of opinion that ensued the Minister was as likely to be right as the Sovereign, and his sole responsibility to Parliament and the country should have carried with it an almost unfettered decision.

The notion that foreign policy belongs in some mysterious way to the Royal prerogative is a survival from Tudor or earlier times, and on the Continent is still the most prominent and baneful attribute of monarchy. When in March 1855 Lord John Russell visited Berlin, in the vain hope of enlisting Prussia on the side of the Allies against Russia, he found that "the King holds in his hands the direction of the whole of the foreign policy of his kingdom." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 248.) And, though it never came to that in England, the tendency of the Queen's influence in foreign policy, beneficial as it often was, inclined in that direction ; such policy coming to be considered by her as something which concerned only the Court and the Foreign Minister, and in which Parliament hardly counted at all.

The position thus assumed by the Crown is all the more curious from its contrast with the restrictions still imposed on the Crown in unimportant details. In theory every letter of the Crown to or from a foreign potentate must be shown to the Foreign Minister or Prime Minister of the day, and the Queen and Prince always complied with this rule. (*Martin*, iv. 329.) It seems absurd that, when the sister of Louis Philippe died in 1848, the Queen should have had to check her natural wish to write the King a letter of condolence till she had received the consent of Lord John Russell. (*Letters*, ii. 168–72.) Lord Palmerston's leave had to be asked and given before she could receive in London a visit from the exiled Louis Philippe and his wife. (March 5, 1848, *ib.*

ii. 192.) Nor might she receive a visit at Osborne from the Duke and Duchess of Nemours till Lord John Russell had disclaimed any political objection. (*Letters*, ii. 242.)

In a very different key was pitched the tone of the Court in more serious foreign relations, as the Prince came to feel his seat firmer in the saddle. The clear right to offer advice shaded by degrees into a claim to enforce it and an expectation of compliance on the part of the consulting Minister. The Court claimed the right of ultimate decision, as, for example, in the following words from the Queen to Lord Clarendon on July 24, 1855: "Having read the whole of these documents, she confesses that she requires some explanation as to the advantages which are to arise to England from the proposed Treaty, before she can come to any decision about it." (*ib.* iii. 169.)

And this to Lord Cowley, our Ambassador at Paris, on June 5, 1859, indicates the position that was asserted by the Crown and accepted by its Ministers: "The Queen has read Lord Cowley's letter with regret. Nothing could be more dangerous and unwise than at this moment to enter into negotiations with Russia on the best manner of disposing of the Emperor of Austria's dominions. The Queen cannot understand how Lord Cowley can propose anything so indefensible in a moral point of view." (*ib.* iii. 435.)

Stockmar's influence may no doubt be detected in this change of tone, for, though he thought the English the only sound nation in Europe, he thought us in foreign affairs "vain, prejudiced, arrogant, awkward, and ignorant." (*Lord Granville to Lord Canning*, December 2, 1856, in Fitzmaurice's *Lord Granville*, i. 219.) The Prince shared his views, telling Lord Granville, after sixteen years of English politics, that the fault of English statesmen was their lack of philosophical training and their inability to look at a subject as a whole: he thought the Foreign Office under Lord Clarendon ("always most eager to see Lord Palmerston moved," *Letters*, ii. 309, August 5, 1850) the only one that was creditable to the country. (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 140.) But unless this opinion was well concealed, it can hardly have been pleasing to Palmerston.

It is of interest to examine cursorily how this claim of the

Crown to the dominant voice over foreign affairs worked in practice in the main international difficulties that troubled the course of the Victorian reign. The storms began early. For within ten years of the Queen's accession and within seven of her marriage there occurred three good chances of war with France: (1) in 1840 in connection with Mehemet Ali; (2) in 1844 in the Tahitian quarrel; (3) in 1846 over the Spanish Marriages question.

(1) In 1840 our joint ultimatum with Russia, Austria, and Prussia to Mehemet Ali to evacuate North Syria greatly offended France, who was excluded from this concert of the Powers. Even the King of Belgium thought France harshly treated in the matter, after ten years of good behaviour. (*Letters*, i. 289, September 22, 1840.) He could not understand what had made Palmerston so *extremely hostile to the King* and Government of France; a *little civility* would have gone a great way with the French. . . . But Palmerston liked *to put his foot on their necks.* (*ib.* i. 294, October 2, 1840.) He thought France ought to have been invited to be a party to the Convention of July 15 against Mehemet. The Queen on the other hand thought France "wrong, and quite in the wrong," for she had seen all the papers and knew how France was engaged to act with us and then refused; still she was anxious that France should be pacified. The question came near to splitting up the Cabinet, owing to the divergent views of Palmerston and Lord John Russell, the latter being for mutual concessions with France, and prepared to break up the Government rather than face the evils and hazards of war. (*Greville*, iv. 323.) Palmerston held all the time that there was no foundation for the alarm of war, that the French did not mean war, and that such feeling as there was for it in France had been produced by the Ministry and their organs in the Press. (*Letters*, i. 303.)

Happily Palmerston proved to be right. On October 11 the Queen wrote to him to express her satisfaction at the return of amity on the part of France, and her hope that it would be met in a very friendly spirit by Palmerston and the Government; and she thought some return should be made to Louis Philippe for his pacific efforts. "I feel *we* owe *much* of the change of the conduct of France to the peace-

able disposition of the dear King," she wrote to her uncle on October 13. The King of France, indeed, must have the main credit, for he checked Thiers' warlike preparations, dismissed Thiers' Ministry, and substituted for them Soult and Guizot, who were all for peace and the maintenance of the *entente cordiale*. But the Queen, too, had her share in it, describing herself on October 16 as "having worked hard this last week to bring about something conciliatory," and urging her uncle to persuade the French King to cease from arming. This he did, receiving from the King the reply that by dint of great exertion he had made Thiers more moderate about armaments, and he thanked the Queen for her great zeal on behalf of peace, a work he deemed "of the greatest importance for everything worth caring for in Europe." (*Letters*, i. 307.)

After the Allied fleet had captured St. Jean d'Acre on November 3, the Queen pressed on her Foreign Secretary the importance of some conciliatory agreement with France; her "earnest and only wish was peace," nor did she think the honour and dignity of the country would be compromised by some effort to soften the irritation of France. France had been humbled, and was in the wrong, but, therefore, it was easier than if we had failed to do something to bring matters right again. (*ib.* i. 314.) In all this we see monarchy at its best.

(2) In 1844 it nearly came to war between France and England on the Tahitian question, and it came still nearer in consequence of certain British naval officers who, having witnessed the bombardment of Tangiers by the French, in a series of letters to the *Times* accused the French Admiral and Navy of deficiency in courage. "These letters in the *Times* are outrageous," wrote the Queen, in just indignation on August 27, 1844. By September 15 the trouble was settled, but the danger, as the Queen wrote on that day, had been *imminent*. "Poor Aberdeen stood *almost alone* in trying to keep matters peaceable." (*ib.* ii. 25.) It is to the eternal honour of Lord Aberdeen on the one side, and of Guizot on the French side, that the *entente cordiale* they had established between the two countries did not break down under the strain of hostile feeling caused by the imprisonment

by the French governor of Tahiti of Pritchard, the ex-missionary and ex-consul. Louis Philippe had to pay compensation from his own Civil List, so impossible would it have been to have got it from the Chamber of Deputies, and a majority in the English Cabinet advocated measures which, but for Aberdeen, must have ended in war.

Writing to Madame de Lieven after the strife was over, Aberdeen described the state of public feeling as something inconceivable: "I saw it with astonishment and regret, but it was impossible to deny that persons of all ranks and classes had made up their minds to war; even those from whom it could least have been expected" (Stanmore's *Aberdeen*, 158), and it is almost needless to add that the Press in both countries, as Greville wrote, "blew the coals with all their might and main." (v. 258.)

The Queen's wise thought of inviting Louis Philippe to England did much to re-establish the peace of the two countries on the footing of personal friendship between the Sovereigns.

(3) But, unfortunately, the Spanish marriage dispute in 1846 rudely interrupted these friendlier relations. In 1841 there had been an attempt in Spain in favour of Queen Christina, which had the good wishes of the French Government, and thereby caused Queen Victoria to complain of French jealousy of English influence. The idea of the marriage of a daughter of Spain with a son of the King of France was thought menacing to Europe, and on December 13, 1842, the Queen wrote to her uncle a letter which shows how suspicion and mistrust were still alive: "The news from Spain are better, but I must own frankly to you that *we are all disgusted* at the *French intrigues* which have *without a doubt* been at the bottom of it all, and can, I fear, be traced very close to the Tuileries." (*Letters*, i. 558.) The question became acute in July 1846, in which month Lord John Russell succeeded Sir Robert Peel as Prime Minister, and Lord Palmerston succeeded Lord Aberdeen as Foreign Minister. It was this change that caused the trouble, for, had Lord Aberdeen remained, there seems little doubt but that, by his vigorous control of Sir H. Bulwer at Madrid, the question would have been settled without friction. The Queen in a

letter of October 16, 1847, to Lord John complained of the "gross duplicity and immorality" shown by France in the matter, and entreated him personally "not to underrate the importance of keeping our foreign policy beyond reproach." (*Letters*, ii. 156.) But later revelations show that the Queen's complaint of French diplomacy was really unfounded, since Lord Stanmore in his account of the episode in his *Life of Lord Aberdeen* quite exculpates the French from the charges of breach of faith (162–73).

It was thus the unsettled state of Europe, the nervousness, and discontent in all countries with that Settlement of Vienna in 1815 which was so fondly hoped would prove durable, that forced foreign politics to the front during the first half of the Queen's reign, till, in fact, the exhaustion consequent on the Franco-German War of 1870 brought the world back to a restless interlude of peace. The international questions at issue were of greater gravity than any questions of domestic politics, and naturally the Court or the Queen took a greater interest in them.

So, as time went on, her supervision of foreign politics became sterner, as shown by her correspondence with Lord Palmerston on November 17, 1847. When the Queen protested against a draft which seemed to pledge us beforehand to a line of policy which might involve the question of peace or war under future and uncertain contingencies, Lord Palmerston replied that in compliance with her wishes he had omitted the whole of the latter part of the dispatch. (*ib.* ii. 160, 161.) The supervision of drafts and dispatches entailed on the Queen enormous labour, from which there was no shrinking. When the Emperor Napoleon was told by the Prince that every foreign dispatch not only went through the Queen's hands but was read by her, his astonishment knew no bounds. (*Martin*, iii. 110.) And as, according to a letter from Lord John Russell to the Prince of June 19, 1849, as many as 28,000 dispatches had been received at or sent from the Foreign Office in 1848, the Emperor's astonishment can astonish no one else.

Lord Malmesbury, intimate for many years with Louis Napoleon, always had a good word for the friend of his early life, and reminded English readers, after the Emperor's fall,

of his constant fidelity to the British alliance ; of the support he had given to us in the Trent affair of 1861, when war with America was only just escaped ; and of his allowing our troops a passage through France for the more rapid dealing with the Indian Mutiny in 1857. But the Emperor was a most disturbing element in the fifties and sixties of the nineteenth century, and the degree of trust to be placed in him did much to divide the Queen from her Ministers.

The Queen never trusted him, though she disclaimed all personal hostility to him, and thought we owed him much during 1849 and 1850 for having raised the French Government from the mud. (*Letters*, ii. 435.) She thought her uncle, Leopold, had no reason for alarm, but she advised him at all events not to show it. She told him on February 17, 1852, that she was very glad to hear that he was quietly preparing to strengthen himself against Napoleon, as she thought that would put him on his good behaviour. But the Belgian king became increasingly alarmed as time went on, so that when he died on December 9, 1865, Lord Malmesbury wrote of him that " the last years of his life were spent in perpetual terror of Louis Napoleon, and he was constantly alarming our Ministers and everybody on the subject." (*Memoirs*, ii. 345.)

Stockmar, too, inculcated the same mistrust, writing to Lord Granville on February 19, 1852, that Napoleon had inherited his uncle's system in foreign affairs, and would be driven by force of circumstance to follow it. (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 59.) Mistrust is a plant of easy propagation, and doubtless the fears of Stockmar and her uncle reacted on the Queen, who wrote to Stockmar on February 5, 1852, that " with such an extraordinary man as Louis Napoleon one can never be for one instant safe. It makes me very melancholy ; I love peace and quiet—in fact, I *hate* politics and turmoil, and I grieve to think that a spark may plunge us into the midst of war. Still I think *that* may be avoided. Any attempt on Belgium would be *casus belli for us* ; *that* you may rely upon." (*Letters*, ii. 438.)

Yet the Queen had no objection to a closer alliance between Prussia and Belgium. On February 1, 1842, she wrote to

her uncle that the King of Prussia was very anxious for Belgium to become *liée* with Germany, and she added: "I think, dearest uncle, that it would be for the real good of Belgium if it could be so." (*Letters*, i. 475.) Three days later he replied that no doubt "nothing could be better than to link this country (Belgium) as much as possible to Germany. The public feeling was and is still favourable to this, but in Germany three years ago they were childishly ultra, and kicked us off most unnecessarily, which renders everything of the sort much less easy." (*ib.* i. 476.) Yet the neutrality of Belgium had been guaranteed by the Powers only three years before.

When in November 1852 it was a question of the French President becoming Emperor, the Queen impressed on Lord Malmesbury the importance of non-committal and of informing our allies that we should not join with them in a refusal to acknowledge him. "Objectionable as this appellation no doubt is, it may hardly be worth offending France and her ruler by refusing to recognise it, . . . any attempt to dictate to France the style of her Ruler would strengthen Louis Napoleon's position; our object should be to leave France alone, as long as she is not aggressive." (*ib.* ii. 482.) And one of the great merits of Lord Derby's Government was his ready recognition of the Second Empire, in contrast to the hesitations and objections of the other Powers. The Imperial title, assumed on December 2, 1852, was officially recognised on the 4th.

But the Queen fully shared the nervousness of her people, and tried to impress Lord Derby with a sense of "our defenceless state," and with the necessity of a *large* outlay, "to protect us from foreign attack, which would almost ensure us against war." (*ib.* ii. 484, November 13, 1852.) Not even Stockmar's presentation to Napoleon at Strasburg and his decoration with the *Legion d'honneur* could really reconcile the Queen to the upstart Emperor.

But the Queen always tried to add personal intimacy to the frail securities of the world's peace. As through King Louis Philippe, so through Louis Napoleon, she sought to cement the *entente cordiale* with France. Accordingly, Napoleon was welcomed at Court in 1855, in the middle of

the Crimean War, and the Queen's record of her impressions of him remains one of the best descriptions of the man who so mystified his generation. (*ib.* iii. 155–60.) After her return visit in August of the same year she wrote to her uncle: "I have formed a *great* affection for the Emperor, and I believe it is very reciprocal" (*ib.* iii. 175); and to Stockmar: "For the Emperor *personally* I have conceived a *real* affection and friendship, and so I may truly say of the Prince." (*ib.* iii. 177.) Standing before the coffin of the first Napoleon by torchlight on the arm of Napoleon III. she felt how all the old enmities and rivalries had been *wiped out.* And when she heard of the fall of Sebastopol, she wrote how it would delight "my brother and faithful ally —and friend, Napoleon III.—I may add, for we really are *great friends.*"

But the vision of national friendship was too fair to last, and so speedily did the horizon cloud over after the Crimean War that we find Lord Granville writing to Lord Canning on November 24, 1856: "The detestation felt for us by all classes of politicians in France is beyond description" (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 218): a good commentary on the value and vanity of all such military alliances.

A qualified friendship with France and a closer one with Prussia and the German Powers were the main ideas of the Queen's foreign policy, so far as she was able to influence it. The ties of personal relationship and the tradition of the Napoleonic Wars made the Prussian friendship the easier of the two, and later events throw interest on the fact that in the year 1840 the King of Prussia sent to the Duke of Wellington, through Lord William Russell, to know whether in the event of war with France the Duke would take command of the forces of the German Confederation. The Duke replied that without the Queen's consent he could not do so, but that with it he would be both able and glad to lead a German army against France. (*Greville*, v. 34, 35, 55.) When the King of Prussia landed in England to act as godfather to the Prince of Wales on January 24, 1841, the Duke, dressed in his Prussian Field-Marshal's uniform with the Black Eagle, met him, and the King, seizing him by both hands, exclaimed: "My dear Duke, I am rejoiced to see you; this

is indeed a great day." When Parliament met on February 5, the Queen drove down in state to the House of Lords with the King, who sat on a chair near the woolsack, mightily pleased with his reception by the Queen and by all classes. And when he left the country, he gave snuff-boxes of five hundred guineas value apiece to the heads of the Royal Household, and watches to others. (*Greville*, v. 78, 82.)

These happy relations were improved by a visit to the English Court of the Prince of Prussia (later the first Emperor William), who then and in later visits in 1848, 1851, 1853, and 1856 established an intimate friendship with the Prince Consort; though it should be noted that when he came over in March 1848 it was in disguise and as a fugitive for his life from the anger of Berlin. (*Letters*, ii. 208.) But his friendship with the Prince Consort, to use the words of Sir Theodore Martin, "came to a happy climax in the marriage by which the reigning families of Prussia and England became united in 1858," when the son of the future German Emperor married the daughter of the Queen and Prince Albert, so making them the grandparents of the future German Emperor William II. A happy climax? Alas, for human prescience!

But in those halcyon days there was no ground for political jealousy. Germany was only just beginning to feel her limbs. On November 11, 1840, Lord Palmerston, writing to the Queen, spoke of a German feeling and spirit of nationality having sprung up among all the German people, who, instead of receiving the French as liberators, as many of them did in 1792–93, would now rise as one man to repel an invasion. (*ib.* i. 312.) King Frederick William IV. was almost abject in his supplication to Queen Victoria that in the projected Conference for the settlement of the Swiss dispute in 1847 the German Confederation "should appear as one of the great Powers, and should be admitted as such by the other great Powers." (*ib.* ii. 163.) To which the Queen replied that much as she "would like to see Germany take her place amongst the Powers of Europe," Germany could not so take part, as she had not been one of the guaranteeing Powers of Switzerland. (*ib.* ii. 164.) And on February 27, 1848, when revolution was again afoot, he adjured the Queen "on both knees," and falling at her feet,

that in union with Germany and with the Emperors of Austria and Russia she would say the word to France which would restrain her from war. (*ib.* ii. 178.)

Already German expansion was in the air. Greville, travelling in Germany in 1843, reported a great wish there for colonies and a navy; Prussia was already beginning to build warships. (v. 184.) Also he found a growing desire on the part of the smaller States to form a nation under Prussia or Austria. In 1850 the incorporation of the Schleswig-Holstein Duchies had become a primary object of ambition, as securing an outlet to the sea, and enabling Germany to realise her cherished dream of one day becoming a great naval Power. So the Germans viewed with extreme bitterness the combined action of England and the other maritime Powers to defeat this deep-seated and very natural ambition. (*Martin*, ii. 311.)

The Prince's greatest political interest, and therefore the Queen's, was the political development of Germany. In 1847 the Prince drew up a memorandum on German affairs for the instruction of the King of Prussia, which Stockmar wisely dissuaded him from sending. (*ib.* i. 439.) As he wrote to Stockmar on September 11, 1850: "Wherever I am, Germany is constantly before my eyes"; adding sadly that, "alas, they show me that immorality is everywhere in the ascendant, and that therefore nothing can come right." (*ib.* ii. 323.) He thought Germany "to be going utterly to the deuce under the miserable policy of its rulers, and to be becoming a still readier toy for the next revolution." (*ib.* ii. 314.) Again, on October 7, 1850: "Of German polities I dislike to speak as much as yourself. The vileness or measureless incapacity of those who hold the reins of government is too provoking." (*ib.* ii. 328.) But the strength of his disapproval was the measure of his affection.

And the strength of this feeling towards Germany is the key to all that followed in connection with the Queen's foreign policy through the difficult years of the first half of her reign; it is the key also to her troubles with successive Foreign Ministers, who did not always share her German sympathies. The revolutionary troubles in Germany in 1848 made her "quite ashamed about that once really so peaceful and

happy people." (*Letters*, ii. 237, October 10, 1848.) The idea of our forcing Austria to give up her lawful possessions in Italy she denounced as "really quite immoral": "it hurts me terribly." But she disliked Austria's opposition to the hegemony of Prussia in Germany; "Austria should behave better, and not oppose the consolidation of a central Power, else I know not what is to become of poor Germany." (*ib.* ii. 256, March 6, 1849.)

King Leopold had advised her on April 19, 1839, that she "ought to have weight and influence in the affairs of Europe" (*ib.* i. 193), and this influence she always endeavoured to have, and to use it beneficently. It was her strong remonstrance in 1863 that deterred Napoleon from his schemes for the annexation of the east bank of the Rhine, and to her the King of Prussia ascribed at that time the preservation of Germany from a French invasion.

To promote, so far as in her lay, the strength of Prussia was, for the Queen, the first of duties. The fear that Prussia might be excluded from a German Empire under the hegemony of Austria, to the detriment of the interests of her son-in-law, the Crown Prince of Prussia, filled her with alarm; and when in the autumn of 1863 she visited Coburg, her letters were frequent to the brother-in-law, Duke Ernest, then attending the German Diet of Sovereigns at Frankfurt, on behalf of Prussia. She entreated him, as much as lay in his power, "to prevent a weakening of Prussia, which not only my own feeling resists—on account of the future of our children—but which would surely also be contrary to the interest of Germany; and I know that our dear angel Albert always regarded a strong Prussia as a necessity, for which, therefore, it is a sacred duty for me to work." (*Lee*, 338.)

So when again in 1867 the Emperor's proposals about Luxemburg caused the war-cloud to arise, it was again the Queen's appeal to the Powers for the peace of Europe that led to the Conference in London which averted the storm. (*ib.* 379.)

In the other Conferences in London in 1864, when Prussia and Austria were contending with Denmark for Schleswig-Holstein, she strove personally, though in vain, for mutual concessions between the belligerents. (*ib.* 350.) And when

the final settlement of the conquered Duchies drove Prussia and Austria into war in 1866, she pressed on her Prime Minister the proposal of herself as mediator to the King of Prussia, incurring thereby the bitter jealousy of Bismarck, who resented her interference and complained of her anti-Prussian bias. (*ib.* 366, 367.)

When the great storm burst in 1870, the Queen strove to avert it by letters to the principals of Prussia and France; and though her sympathies were strong for Germany, she entreated the influence of the Crown Princess and of the Queen of Prussia to prevent the bombardment of Paris. Had her counsels of moderation been followed, the whole train of circumstances which resulted in the war of 1914 might have been averted. Nothing could have excelled her letter of September 21, 1870, to the King of Prussia: "In the name of our friendship and in the interests of humanity, I express the hope that you may be able so to shape your conditions of peace for the vanquished that they may be able to accept them. Your name will stand yet higher if, at the head of your victorious army, you now resolve to make peace in a generous spirit." (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, ii. 45.) On October 2, 1870, she telegraphed to the King of Prussia, entreating him to be magnanimous about peace, pressing her Minister to offer mediation, not only for stopping the war, but for modifying the vindictive terms insisted on by Germany. (*Lee*, 406, 407.) Forty years of European unrest, followed by a desolating war, have been the result of her failure in this merciful direction.

Equally admirable and more successful was the letter written by the Queen, at Lord Granville's instigation, in 1873, when there seemed a likelihood of a renewed attack by Germany upon France. She appealed directly to the German Emperor in the name of her "personal devotion to him and his family, her devotion to Germany, and her satisfaction that by means of his glorious victories the union of Germany had been effected," that Germany should show herself "as magnanimous in peace as she was invincible in war." Though there could be no doubt, she said, of the issue of a second war with France, "it was not clear what effect another great war might have upon some of the most dangerous social questions

of the day," and she concluded with an expression of confidence in the judgment and moderation of the Emperor. (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 115, 116.) And again in 1875, on the occasion of a similar renewal of the menace of war, she directly offered her mediation to the Emperor, with the result that both he and Bismarck were vexed by her interference, and disclaimed the designs imputed to them. (*Lee*, 431, 432.)

These instances show how much may be done for the peace of the world by a constitutional monarch to whom that peace is a sincere object of desire. But that peace is liable to be imperilled should the monarch fall under the influence of a Minister of a different mind. After 1874 the Queen fell completely under the spell of Lord Beaconsfield, who wished to make her the dictatress of Europe. When the Balkan troubles began in 1876, it was easy to revive in her the old idea of the Prince Consort's time, that it was England's duty to protect Turkey against Russia, and her vexation was limitless at Gladstone's intervention on the other side. But by letters to the Czar, the German Emperor, and Bismarck she strove to prevent the calamity of war, though Bismarck persisted in believing that it was on war with Russia that her heart was set. (*ib.* 437.)

After the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 had ended in favour of Russia, the Sultan appealed personally to the Queen to induce the Czar to accept lenient terms of peace in 1878; nor was war between England and Russia ever more imminent than when that between Turkey and Russia had just ended. Then came the Berlin Conference to settle the extent to which Russia should reap the fruits of victory; and when Lord Beaconsfield, before starting for Berlin, told the Queen that his determination to prevent Russia from obtaining territory south of the Danube might result in war, he met with no opposition from the Queen, and the preparations for war that were set in motion enjoyed her full approval. (*ib.* 440.) So completely had her better judgment yielded to Imperialism under the skilful guidance of her almost omnipotent Prime Minister. The honour of averting a Russian war at that time belongs more to Gladstone than to the Queen, who never forgave him for his attacks on Lord Beaconsfield and his policy, and in her letters invariably

described them as shameless or disgraceful. (*ib.* 445.) But the Election of 1880 was the nation's answer both to the Queen and her Minister, and a pacific reaction followed the years in which the Court identified itself heart and soul with the wild ambitions of the English war party.

CHAPTER IV

The Struggle for Foreign Policy

Lord Palmerston's tenure of the Foreign Office in Lord John Russell's Government from July 1846 to his dismissal in December 1851 was one of incessant conflict with the Court. There was some truth, doubtless, in the Prince's complaint to Stockmar on September 2, 1847, of Palmerston's hobby of plunging States into constitutional reforms for which they had no inclination (*Martin*, i. 426); but on the whole history has justified his policy.

The story is worth telling in some detail, because it shows how the undefined powers of the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Crown, over foreign affairs often clash, and how insignificant is the nation's control over matters which more nearly touch its interests than any others.

Under the reign of the Queen and the Prince, with Stockmar behind them, the claim of the Crown to the dominant control of foreign policy made rapid development, and the trouble that ensued between the Court and Lord Palmerston during the Russell Ministry resulted from a struggle on his part against a tendency which, if successful, would have assimilated our monarchy to the absolutist monarchies on the Continent. That the Court inclined to such assimilation is proved by the Prince Consort's conversation with Napoleon at Boulogne in 1854, when he explained to him how Palmerston's foreign policy had been an exaggeration of Canning's, having for its "object to form a counterpoise to the Holy Alliance of the Continental Governments, by supporting the popular parties in every country, with a view to establishing constitutions after the model of our own. This was a doctrine very like that of the Jacobin propaganda, and produced the greatest hatred of England

all over the Continent"; that is, in the Courts of Austria, Prussia, and Russia. But this very Continental dislike had procured Palmerston great popularity in England, and he had used it "to coerce his colleagues and his Sovereign into anything he chose to advocate." With this main principle of Palmerston's policy, the Queen and himself had long been at variance. (*ib.* iii. 112.) This fundamental difference of political sympathy is the key to the whole period.

As Greville points out, the new Whig Ministry of 1846 found the Prince in a very different position from that in which the old one had left him in 1841. He had become more prominent, more important, and had an increased authority: all due to the continual attention to his wishes and the Queen's shown by Peel and Lord Aberdeen. (vi. 418.) Bitter indeed was the Queen's regret at losing such pliant Ministers as these. "We felt so safe with them," she wrote to her uncle on July 7, 1846. "Never during the five years that they were with me did they *ever* recommend a *person* or a thing which was not for my or the country's best, and never for the Party's advantage only; and the contrast *now* is very striking; there is much less respect and much less high and pure feeling." (*Letters*, ii. 103.) The Queen never pretended to the impossible virtue of having no political preferences, and in a letter to Lord John Russell on July 16, 1846, regretted the mistake she had made in consenting to a dissolution in 1841, the result of which had been "a majority returned against her of nearly one hundred votes." (*ib.* ii. 108.)

It fell to Palmerston's lot to make a stand against the enhanced claims of the Crown to the control of foreign policy. A good instance of this claim occurred in 1853, when Lord Aberdeen's Government decided to send the fleet to Turkish waters. The Prince was highly indignant, writing on October 10: "Here were decisions taken by the Cabinet, perhaps even acted upon, involving the most momentous consequences, without her (the Queen's) previous concurrence or even the means for her to judge of the propriety or impropriety of the course to be adopted, with evidence that the Minister in whose judgment the Queen

placed her chief reliance entirely disapproved of it. The position was morally and constitutionally a wrong one. The Queen ought to have the whole policy in spirit and ultimate tendency developed before her to give her deliberate sanction to it, knowing what it involved her in abroad and at home. . . . Lord Aberdeen renounced one of his chief sources of strength in the Cabinet by not making it apparent that he requires the sanction of the Crown to the course proposed by the Cabinet, and has to justify the advice by argument before it can be adopted, and that it does not suffice to come to a decision at the table of the Cabinet." (*Letters*, ii. 553.) But if this doctrine be true, it is on the Crown and not on the Cabinet that political responsibility should rest.

Hardly had the Russell Government started than the Spanish Marriage question opened a breach between the Queen and her new Foreign Minister. For the coolness that followed between France and England the Queen threw the chief blame on Palmerston. He had mismanaged the matter, she told her uncle on September 14, 1846. "If our dear Aberdeen was still at his post, the whole thing would not have happened"; for, though Palmerston had behaved "most fairly and openly towards France," yet "say what one will, it is *he again* who *indirectly* gets us into a squabble with France!" (*ib.* ii. 122.) And again: "No doubt if Lord Aberdeen had been at his post what has happened would *not* have taken place, and suspicion of Lord Palmerston *has* been the cause of the *unjustifiable* conduct of the French Government." (*ib.* ii. 125.)

Then followed trouble in Portugal in the November of the same year. On the 28th the Queen told Palmerston that she did "not quite approve of the tone of his dispatch to our Secretary of Legation at Lisbon. It was more likely to irritate than to produce any effect. It must give the impression that we espoused the cause of the rebels. She was afraid the dispatch had gone the day before, and she hoped that in future Lord Palmerston would not put it out of her power to state her opinion in good time." (*ib.* ii. 132.)

This was a constant grievance. On April 17, 1847, the Queen reminded Lord Palmerston that she had several times asked him, through the Prime Minister and personally, to see that the drafts to our Foreign Ministers were not dispatched without previous submission to herself, as had happened that very day with the drafts to Lisbon ; and she once more repeated her desire that Lord Palmerston should prevent the recurrence of the practice. (*ib.* ii. 143.) And on October 9, 1847, it was again : " The Queen must *again* observe that the drafts have since some weeks past been sent to her *after* they were gone, so that she can make no remark thereon." (*ib.* ii. 152.)

It was at this period that Pope Pio Nono had begun his efforts on behalf of reforms, and in reply to a letter from Lord John Russell informing the Queen of Palmerston's wish to send Lord Minto to Rome on a mission of encouragement the Queen and the Prince wrote a most interesting statement of their views. They were anxious for Austria. That country, they urged, looked on the progress of liberal institutions and constitutional government in Italy as a matter of life and death to Austria, who would oppose them at any risk and with all her might. Such a mission would be " a most *hostile step* towards an old and natural ally " ; they feared it would lead Austria to attack Italy, and we ought not to urge the Pope to defy her, but should disclaim to Austria any intention of interference, whilst asserting the right of every State to self-government, and intimating that we should not view with indifference any armed invasion to prevent it ; " this step ought to be taken as *quickly* and *openly* as possible ; " the bold declaration of England for the right of independent States to manage their own internal affairs would make England most popular all over the Continent, and particularly in Germany. (*Martin*, i. 428.) Fortunately Lord John's reply, that these Royal views exactly coincided with his own and Lord Palmerston's, averted trouble, but the Crown's claim to dictate about foreign affairs struck a note of incipient discord. The Queen, though she admitted on July 5, 1848, that she had approved of Lord Minto's mission at the time, complained to Lord Palmerston that it was prejudicial to the Austrians, and

imposed on England additional care not to appear as the abettors of the anti-Austrian movement.

In March 1848 occurred one of Lord Palmerston's most unfortunate indiscretions. In a dispatch to Sir H. Bulwer, our Minister at Madrid, he directed him to advise the Spanish Government to adopt a constitution, and to urge the Queen of Spain to call to her councils some of the men trusted by the Liberal Party. The dispatch was not intended to be shown or published, but as it was, the Spanish Ministry naturally took it as "offensive to the dignity of a free and independent nation"; the dispatches were returned, and on May 19 Sir H. Bulwer received his passports and was ordered to leave Madrid within forty-eight hours. The Spanish Minister in London was not immediately withdrawn, but after a vain attempt to explain the action of Spain he too received his passports on June 14, and diplomatic relations between the two countries were suspended. (*Greville*, vi. 173, 187.)

It was in this year of storm and stress that Greville felt impelled to praise "the extraordinary good sense of Prince Albert," whose influence over the Queen he described as "boundless." (*ib.* vi. 190.) And it was with justice that he wrote, on March 25, 1848: "In the midst of the roar of the revolutionary waters that are deluging the whole earth, it is grand to see how we stand erect and unscathed. It is the finest tribute that ever has been paid to our Constitution, the greatest test that has ever been applied to it." (*ib.* vi. 159.)

Yet it was a test under which it nearly broke; for on almost every aspect of foreign politics the Court was in acute antagonism with Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston. The claim to regard foreign politics as the Crown's special preserve is plainly visible through all their correspondence.

In 1848, when the Milanese rose against Radetzky, the Austrian Governor, and the King of Sardinia marched to their aid, the Queen's Austrian sympathies were clear from the first. The Treaties of 1815 had assigned Lombardy and Venetia to Austria, and she was justly anxious for their observation. The Prime Minister, on the other hand, in a memorandum of May 1, 1848, advocated our conjoint attempt with France to procure the frank abandonment by

Austria of Lombardy and Venetia, with such compensation to France on the side of Savoy as came to pass in 1860. He also favoured Lord Palmerston's sensible idea of a sale of Venetia by Austria, which, if consented to by the latter, would have saved Europe infinite trouble and bloodshed. (*Martin*, v. 271.)

The following extracts show the Queen's feelings with great clearness :

" The Queen returns the enclosed draft. She has written upon it, in pencil, a passage which she thinks ought to be added, if the draft—though civil—is not to be a mere refusal to do anything for Austria, and a recommendation that whatever the Italians ask for ought to be given, for which a mediation is hardly necessary. The Queen thinks it most important that we should try to mediate and put a stop to the war, and equally important that the boundary which is to be settled should be such a one as to make a recurrence of hostilities unlikely." (*Letters*, ii. 211.)

" Why Charles Albert ought to get any additional territory the Queen cannot in the least see." (*ib.* ii. 207.)

This difference on the leading question of the hour naturally tended to affect the handling of all other questions.

On June 17, 1848, the Queen again complained vigorously to Lord John of Palmerston's system of diplomacy, which made the taking up of party politics in foreign countries its principal object. That system was condemned by herself, by Lord John, by the Cabinet, and, she believed, by public opinion. Lord Palmerston's objection to caution our Minister in Portugal against falling into this fault brought it to an issue, whether this *erroneous* policy was to be maintained in the future, or a wiser course followed. (*ib.* ii. 213.)

On June 26, 1848, she sent the Prime Minister a letter from the Foreign Secretary, with the complaint that " no remonstrance has any effect with Lord Palmerston." (*ib.* ii. 215.)

When, much to Palmerston's satisfaction, the King of Sardinia, helped by Tuscany, Naples, and Rome, had been successful in Lombardy, she wrote to him on July 1, 1848, that " she cannot conceal from him that she is ashamed of the policy which we are pursuing in this Italian contro-

versy in abetting wrong, and this for the object of gaining influence in Italy." (*Letters*, ii. 215.)

But fortune turned against the Piedmontese, and Austria recovered her lost ground. In vain the Italians had called on France for help; for General Cavaignac would only combine with England for a peaceful mediation. Lord Palmerston's ideas were not the Queen's. "The Queen quite agrees," she wrote to Lord John on August 21, 1848, "that the principal consideration always to be kept in sight is the preservation of the peace of Europe; but it is precisely on that ground that she regrets that the terms proposed by Lord Palmerston . . . are almost the only ones which are most offensive to Austria." It would be a calamity for ages to come if this principle was to become part of international law, "'that a people could at any time transfer their allegiance from the Sovereign of one State to that of another by universal suffrage,' and this is what Lord Normanby—no doubt according to Lord Palmerston's wishes—has taken as the basis of the mediation." (*ib.* ii. 227, 228.)

No wonder that the Queen under all these difficulties described herself to her uncle as ready, but for the assistance of Prince Albert, to "sink under the troubles and annoyances and *dégoûts* of her *very* difficult position." (*ib.* ii. 228, August 29, 1848.) The Queen had no special liking for politics. She said of herself, that *much* as she interested herself in *general* European politics, she was every day more convinced that "*we women*, if we *are* to be *good women*, *feminine* and *amiable* and *domestic*, are *not fitted to reign*." (*ib.* ii. 444.) Possibly Lord Palmerston sometimes thought the same. Again she wrote on February 3, 1852, that "we women are not *made* for governing—and if we are good women, we must *dislike* these masculine occupations." Whilst Prince Albert grew daily fonder and fonder of politics and business, she grew daily to dislike them both more and more. (*ib.* ii. 438.) She complained that for reading, in which she delighted, she had little time. Almost her whole *lecture* was absorbed by the immense quantity of dispatches she had to read, besides having much to write, and "a little leisure time to rest." (*ib.* ii. 472.) Hers was no enviable position. In a letter to her uncle of December

20, 1861, after her irreparable loss, she alluded with pathos to her "much-disliked position," which her life with the Prince had alone made bearable. (*ib.* iii. 603.)

The friction continued. On September 2, 1848, having read in the papers that Austria and Sardinia had nearly settled their differences, and that there was talk of a joint French and British naval demonstration in the *Adriatic*, she wrote to Lord Palmerston that she thought it right to inform him without delay that, should such a thing be thought of, it was a step "which the Queen could *not* give her consent to": which seems to dispose of the fiction that such steps lie outside the province of the Crown.

On reaching town she was surprised by the news that Austria had declined our mediation, and she wrote immediately to her Foreign Minister to reproach him for having left her uninformed of so important an event. (*ib.* ii. 229, September 4.)

Annoyances thickened. On the same day she wrote to the Prime Minister about a Palmerstonian draft: "Lord Palmerston has as usual pretended not to have had time to submit the draft to the Queen before he had sent it off. What the Queen has long suspected and often warned against is on the point of happening, viz. Lord Palmerston's using the new *entente cordiale* for the purpose of wresting from Austria her Italian provinces by French arms. This would be a most iniquitous proceeding. . . . Lord John will not fail to observe how very intemperate the whole tone of Lord Palmerston's language is." (*ib.* ii. 230.)

By September 19, 1848, things had come to a sad pass. The Queen told the Prime Minister that she felt she must speak quite openly to him about Lord Palmerston; she felt she could hardly go on with him; that she had no confidence in him; that it made her seriously anxious and uneasy for the welfare of the country and the peace of Europe. Palmerston it was who had been responsible for the Spanish Marriage trouble, and for the harm done last winter in Italy, for he was "distrusted everywhere abroad." "I said that he often endangered the honour of England by taking a very prejudiced and one-sided view of a question . . . that his writings were always as bitter as gall and did great harm, which Lord

John entirely assented to, and that I often felt quite ill from anxiety." So she wished Lord Clarendon to come over from Ireland and become Foreign Secretary, and Lord Palmerston to be made Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. Lord John said what he could for his peccant Minister, but intimated that the change proposed would perhaps turn Palmerston against the Government; and the interview only ended with his promise to bear the subject in mind. (*Letters*, ii. 231–3.)

The question the episode raises is not whether the Court or Palmerston were right in their views and sympathies, but whether such divided authority at the fountain-head of foreign policy is conducive to the best interests of the State.

On October 7, 1848, the Queen sent the Prime Minister an answer she had received from Lord Palmerston: "The partiality of Lord Palmerston in this Italian question really *surpasses all conception*, and makes the Queen *very uneasy* on account of the character and honour of England, and on account of the danger to which the peace of Europe will be exposed." She protested against his anti-Austrian bias in the war, which had ended favourably for Austria: it was "really not safe to settle such important matters without principle and by personal *passion* alone." (*ib.* ii. 235.)

"*What* a very bad figure we cut in this mediation," she wrote to her uncle on October 10, 1848. "Really it is quite immoral . . . for us to force Austria to give up her lawful possessions. . . . It hurts me terribly." (*ib.* ii. 237.)

The same opposition manifested itself in all directions. Palmerston was anxious to conciliate the new French Government. But the Queen did not always follow his motives. Thus she wrote on October 8, 1848: "The Queen cannot refrain from telling Lord Palmerston what a painful impression the perusal of a draft of his to Lord Normanby referring to the affairs of Greece has made upon her, being so little in accordance with the calm dignity she likes to see in all the proceedings of the British Government; she was particularly struck by the language in which Lord Palmerston speaks of King Otho, a Sovereign with whom she stands in friendly relations, and the asperity against the Government of the King of the French, who is really sufficiently lowered and suffering for the mistakes he may have committed,

and that of all this a copy is to be placed in the hands of the Foreign Minister of the French *Republic* the Queen can only see with much regret." Lord Palmerston's answer was that these remarks about the two kings lay at the root of his argument, and were adopted for the conciliation of the new French Government. (*ib.* ii. 237.) But, desirable as such conciliation was, it seems an odd way to have sought it.

At the end of the year, on December 22, 1848, the Queen complained to Lord John Russell that neither Lord Palmerston nor Lord Normanby had shown a proper regard for her wishes and opinion. "The Queen has already, on Lord Palmerston's account, received two public affronts: the one by her Minister in Spain having been sent out of that country; the other now, by the new Emperor of Austria not announcing to her by special mission his accession to the throne, which he did to all other Sovereigns, avowedly, as it appears, to mark the indignation of Austria at the inimical proceedings of the British Foreign Secretary." (*ib.* ii. 246.) And on such a note ended for that eventful year that flagrant disagreement between the Queen and her Foreign Secretary which was destined again so seriously to perplex our politics in 1859 and 1860.

Nor did matters improve with the new year, 1849, when the Cabinet learned for the first time that in the previous September Palmerston had sanctioned the removal of guns from the Government stores for the use of the Sicilian insurgents against the King of Naples. Lord John was much incensed, and reverted to the idea of moving Palmerston from the Foreign Office to Ireland. But he told the Queen that, as he had always approved of Palmerston's foreign policy, he could only offer the exchange if accompanied by a simultaneous offer of an English earldom, or of an English barony without the Garter. The Queen replied the same day that she was "deeply grieved," "as the honour of her Government had always been nearest to her heart. She feels deeply the humiliation to have to make an apology to the Government of Naples, which stands so very low in public estimation, and she naturally dreads the effect this disclosure about the guns will have in the world, when she considers how many accusations have been brought against

the good faith of this country latterly by many different Governments." She expressed a wish to see Lord John about the removal to Ireland, but wished such removal to be so managed " as to reflect the least possible discredit upon the Government and upon Lord Palmerston himself." (*Letters*, ii. 251.) Happily, Lord Palmerston's unexpected readiness to apologise to the injured Neapolitan Government smoothed matters for the time.

In the summer of this year, when the Piedmontese renewed war with Austria, the French answered the success of Austria by occupying Roman territory ; Lord Palmerston addressing several reproaches to Austria, whilst the Queen's sympathies remained enlisted on the Austrian side.

The Court gained a point in its struggle with Palmerston by an agreement that he should send dispatches in the first instance to the Prime Minister, if the Queen so wished. Lord John was to concur in them before their submission to the Queen, and in case of material alteration to acquaint the Queen with his views and submit his reasons. Prince Albert replied that this would be satisfactory, and that in future the Queen would make any remarks she pleased to the Prime Minister, not to the Foreign Secretary. She only wished not to be pressed for an answer within a few minutes, as sometimes had been the case. (*ib.* ii. 263.) Lord Palmerston thus waived his right as Foreign Secretary of taking the Queen's pleasure directly on the affairs of his department. (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 53.)

In connection with the Don Pacifico affair, which began in November 1849, the Queen in February 1850 returned a draft intended for the British envoy at Athens with the wish expressed that it should be altered in accordance with Lord John's views ; and on hearing that it had been sent unaltered, she wrote on February 17 to Lord Palmerston : " The Queen must remark upon this sort of proceeding, of which this is not the first instance, and plainly tell Lord Palmerston that this must not happen again. Lord Palmerston has a perfect right to state to the Queen his reasons for disagreeing with her views, and will always have found her ready to listen to his reasons ; but she cannot allow a servant of the Crown and her Minister to act contrary to her orders, and this

without her knowledge." (*Letters*, ii. 277.) Although the Minister's answer completely cleared him of the charge imputed to him, things were evidently nearly at bursting point. For Lord Clarendon a few days later told Greville how the moment he entered the room to dine at the Palace "the Queen exploded and went with the utmost vehemence and bitterness into the whole of Palmerston's conduct," and how the Prince the next day talked to him for two and a half hours on the subject, pouring forth "without stint or reserve all the pent-up indignation, resentment, and bitterness with which the Queen and himself had been boiling for so long a time past." (vi. 324.) The Prince complained of the humiliation of the Queen before the world arising from the remonstrances and complaints of other Sovereigns; declared that Palmerston was suffered to set at defiance the Sovereign, the Government, and public opinion, and that no redress was obtainable from the Prime Minister. Minutes, he said, were submitted to the Queen in one form and changed by Palmerston into another; Austria, unable to do business with Palmerston, refused to send an ambassador to England. As for himself, he had ceased to try to influence Palmerston; "for above a year past neither the Queen nor he had ever said one word to him." (vi. 324.)

The Prince's dislike for Palmerston was notorious, and when in December 1853 Lord Palmerston's disagreement with Lord John Russell's then projected reform measure led to his brief resignation, the Prince wrote to Stockmar: "The great Liberal braggart, who wanted to press free institutions on every country, finds the reform measure, which Aberdeen approves, too liberal. What mischief that man has done us!" (*Fortnightly*, lxxv. 434.)

On March 2, 1850, the Court had a special interview with Lord John on the subject. The Prime Minister, despite his anxiety not to break up the Whig Party, yet admitted that the Queen's distrust of Lord Palmerston was "a serious impediment to the carrying on of the Government." Lord Palmerston had told him that he could not but be aware that he had forfeited the Queen's confidence, and appeared willing to give up the Foreign Office in exchange for the leadership in the Commons, if Lord John were moved to the House of Lords.

The Prince then said that the Foreign Office could only be held by Lord John himself or by Lord Clarendon. "On the Queen's inquiry why Lord Clarendon had not been proposed for it, Lord John expressed his anxiety that no change in the Ministry should alter the general line of policy, which he conceived to have been quite right, and that Lord Clarendon did not approve of it; somehow or other he never could agree with Lord Clarendon on Foreign Affairs; he thought Lord Clarendon very anti-French and for an alliance with Austria and Russia." (*Letters*, ii. 279–82.) Though nothing came of these proposals, they show how painful had become the difference between the anti-French Court and the pro-French Foreign Minister.

Lord Palmerston's neglect to notify to our Minister at Athens the settlement of the Greek difficulty between himself and the French ambassador led to the renewal of reprisals and the submission of the Greeks. The French were so indignant that they recalled their ambassador, deeming it "incompatible with the dignity of the Republic to have any longer an ambassador in London." (*Greville*, vi. 338.) In Greville's view, this was the "greatest scrape into which Palmerston had ever got," our Government being charged with breach of faith and the violation of a compact. (*ib.* vi. 339.) Prince Albert wrote to Lord John that both the Queen and himself were "exceedingly sorry at the news," adding caustically, "We are not surprised, however, that Lord Palmerston's mode of doing business should not be borne by a susceptible French Government with the same good humour and forbearance as by his colleagues." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 59, May 15, 1850.) The Queen was much vexed, though she deprecated Lord John's proposal for a resignation of the Ministry, and was content that there should be a change in the Foreign Office at the end of the session. The Lords carried a hostile motion against the Government over the Greek affair, but this was cancelled by the triumphant carrying in the Commons of Mr. Roebuck's motion in approval of Palmerston's policy: whereby that Minister's power and popularity increased a hundredfold. So far the victory was with him.

The following from a letter by the Queen to Lord John

on April 14, 1850, in reference to the selection of a Minister for Madrid, reveals the tension that existed: "Lord Palmerston's conduct in this Spanish question in not communicating her letter to Lord John is really too bad, and most disrespectful to the Queen; she can really hardly communicate with him any more; indeed, it would be better that she should not." (*Letters*, ii. 285.)

The Prime Minister had little rest from such letters. On May 18 came one from the Prince, complaining that his own conviction and the Queen's grew stronger and stronger that Lord Palmerston was bringing the hatred borne to him personally by all the Governments of Europe upon England, and that the country ran in serious danger of the consequences. Lord John agreed that the Queen ought not to be exposed to the enmity of Austria, France, and Russia on account of her Minister. But though offering to resign himself, he remained staunch to his offending colleague. He declared it quite impossible to abandon Palmerston on the Greek question, and pronounced the Cabinet and himself as equally to blame, as they had all consented to the measures pursued. He objected to the suggestion of Lord Clarendon's taking his place on the ground of that statesman's close connection with the *Times*, and the violent pro-Austrian line taken by that paper. (*ib.* ii. 288–9.)

Meanwhile Lord Palmerston regarded himself as the victim of a great conspiracy, from which his triumphant acquittal by the House of Commons had delivered him. He complained especially of Lord Clarendon, of Mr. Greville, of Mr. Reeve and of their attacks upon him in the *Times*, and expressed his resolution not to resign, unless so requested by the Queen or the Cabinet. To do so would be to lower his public character for no purpose. (*ib.* ii. 313–4.)

But at last the Court could stand it no longer, and on August 12, 1850, the thunderbolt fell. It had been prepared by Stockmar on March 12, and took the form of a letter to Lord John which left nothing to be desired on the score of lucidity: "With reference to the conversation about Lord Palmerston which the Queen had with Lord John Russell the other day, and Lord Palmerston's disavowal that he ever intended any disrespect to her by the various neglects

of which she has had so long and so often to complain, she thinks it right, in order to *prevent any mistake* for the *future*, shortly to explain *what it is she expects from her Foreign Secretary*. She requires (1) that he will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly as possible *to what* she has given her Royal sanction; (2) having *once given* her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister; such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her Constitutional right of dismissing that Minister. She expects to be kept informed of what passes between him and the Foreign Ministers before important decisions are taken, based upon that intercourse; to receive the Foreign dispatches in good time, and to have the drafts for her approval sent to her in sufficient time to make herself acquainted with their contents before they must be sent off. The Queen thinks it best that Lord John Russell should show this letter to Lord Palmerston." (*Letters*, ii. 315.)

Instead of resigning, Lord Palmerston wrote next day to Lord John to promise compliance with the Queen's wishes. But how deeply he felt the humiliation was manifest in an interview on August 15 with the Prince, who described him as "very much agitated." He "shook, had tears in his eyes, so as quite to move me." He justly argued that the charge of having failed in respect to the Queen was an imputation on his honour as a gentleman, and that if he were guilty he was no longer fit to be tolerated in Society. (*Martin*, ii. 307.) The Prince told him that the Queen had received from him of late years several blows "such as no Sovereign of England had before been obliged to put up with, and which had been most painful to her."

But the situation did not improve. In October the Haynau incident occurred: the General, who had been notorious for his cruelties in the Hungarian War, having to flee from the rude attentions of a London mob. Palmerston in his apology to the Austrian Ambassador had appended a remonstrance on the General's visit having been made at so inopportune a moment. The Queen on October 12 strongly rebuked him for adding this personal censure, and

told him that she could as little approve of the introduction of lynch law into the country as of the *violent* vituperation with which Lord Palmerston accused and condemned public men in other countries, acting in difficult circumstances, on insufficient information and evidence. (*Letters*, ii. 319–22.)

The Prince had complained to Palmerston that his policy had almost invariably differed from the Queen's (*Martin*, ii. 308), and it was impossible to bridge over the difference. The complaint implied the necessary acquiescence of the Foreign Secretary and of Parliament in the wishes of the Crown in foreign affairs. The rival claims had reached a deadlock. "Unfortunately," wrote the Queen to her uncle on December 3, 1850, "Lord Palmerston has contrived to make us so hated by all parties abroad that we have lost our position and our influence, which . . . *ought* to have been *immense*. This it is which pains and grieves me so deeply, and which I have been so plainly speaking to Lord John Russell about. What a noble position we *might* have had, and how wantonly has it been thrown away." (*Letters*, ii. 333.) This no doubt was the Stockmarian view, but it was not that either of the Prime Minister or of Parliament.

The Court and the Foreign Minister were in fact at conflict at nearly every point, especially in relation to German affairs. And English Liberal opinion was strongly on Palmerston's side. Greville mentions how Lord Beauvale praised Palmerston for having acted "a very proper and spirited part," having had to "fight against the violent and inveterate prejudices of the Court" as well as of some in the Cabinet. (vi. 379.) Lord Aberdeen, meeting Greville at Balmoral in September 1849, excepted from his general approval of the Prince's politics his "violent and incorrigible German unionism. He goes all lengths with Prussia; will not hear of the moderate plan of a species of federalism based on the Treaty of Vienna and the old relations of Germany; and insists on a new German Empire with the King of Prussia at its head." (*ib.* v. 305.) His dream came true in 1871, but more recent events seem rather to have justified Palmerston's attitude.

In February 1851 the sky lightened, a Ministerial crisis affording the Court a new hope of an escape from Palmerston.

Lord John, defeated by 48 on Mr. Locke King's motion for the extension of the franchise to the counties, tendered his resignation, and negotiations began which revealed a state of political anarchy. The questions of Protection, of Reform, and of Papal Aggression divided parties hopelessly. In vain the Prince strove for a Coalition, with the Papal question left open. The situation was only saved by the Duke of Wellington's advising the Queen to send for Lord John again, and so, as Greville says, he came back "with his whole crew and without any change whatever." (vi. 392.) And this meant Palmerston back in his old place.

"Alas!" wrote the Queen to her uncle on February 25, "the hope of forming a strong Coalition Government has failed—*for the present.*" In vain she tried to rid herself of Palmerston in the new Cabinet. On March 2 she reiterated her objections to Lord Palmerston, and received from Lord John the renewed promise that her wishes should be attended to. (*Letters*, ii. 376.) The next day she "reminded Lord John of her objections to Lord Palmerston, and his promise that Lord Palmerston should not again be thrust upon her as Foreign Secretary. Lord John admitted to the promise, but said he could not think for a moment of resuming office, and either expel Lord Palmerston or quarrel with him. . . . On the Queen's reiterating that she wanted to keep Lord John and get rid of Lord Palmerston . . . Lord John promised to move Lord Palmerston in the Easter recess, or to resign himself if he should meet with difficulties." (*ib.* ii. 377.) "I have been speaking *very strongly* about Lord Palmerston to Lord John," wrote the Queen to King Leopold on March 4, "and he has *promised* that if the Government should still be in at Easter to make a change."

But the promise could not be kept; for, as Lord John wrote to the Prince on March 14, "I cannot undertake to make any change in the Foreign Office. Our party is hardly united, and any break into sections, following one man or the other, would be fatal to us. I need not say that the Queen would suffer if it were attributed to her desire, and as I have no difference on Foreign Policy, that could not fail to be the case." As usual, he added his willingness to resign. (*ib.* ii. 381.)

So matters went on fairly well till October 1851, when the famous Hungarian patriot Kossuth came to the country. The Queen promptly wrote to Lord John to try to prevent Lord Palmerston from receiving him. Else, she said, she would have again to submit "to insults and affronts, which are the results of Lord Palmerston's conduct." (*ib.* ii. 392.)

Lord John accordingly wrote to Palmerston "positively," requesting him not to receive Kossuth at the Foreign Office. To which Palmerston's reply was: "There are limits to all things. I do not choose to be dictated to as to who I may or may not receive in my own house; and I shall use my own discretion in the matter. You will, of course, use yours as to the composition of your Government. I have not detained your messenger five minutes." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 133, October 30, 1851.)

The Queen wrote next day to her Prime Minister that though *he* might go on with a *colleague*, even after such an answer as Lord Palmerston's, she could not "expose herself to having her positive commands disobeyed by one of her public servants," and that should Lord Palmerston persist in his intention, he could not continue as her Minister. (*Letters*, ii. 393.) To Lord Palmerston himself she wrote to say that his reception of Kossuth at his official or private residence could make no difference as to the public nature of an act liable to offend her Allies, Austria and Russia. "The Queen must therefore demand that the reception of M. Kossuth by Lord Palmerston should not take place." Lord John had himself recommended this "command" as a last resource, but had later in the same day advised against it, and promised a Cabinet meeting on the subject. The Queen was only too thankful, "without her personal intervention," thus to be protected by the Cabinet from the wilful indiscretions of Lord Palmerston, and the incident closed with Lord Palmerston's submission to the Cabinet's support of the Premier's conduct. But the end was not far off, an end destined to have far-reaching and disastrous consequences.

No sooner had Kossuth left the country than public opinion broke out in gratitude to Palmerston for his conduct

towards him. Greville described the Queen as "vastly displeased" at a demonstration at Manchester, where he had been received with as much enthusiasm as herself. (vi. 423.) At the Foreign Office itself Lord Palmerston received a deputation from Finsbury and Islington, to which he expressed his own sympathy and that of the country with the Hungarian cause, without protesting against the terms of "odious and detestable assassins" with which their address had stigmatised the Emperors of Austria and Russia. Greville thought this conduct "on the whole the worst thing Palmerston had ever done" (vi. 423); and the Queen thought so too. She wrote to Lord John that she was "deeply wounded," and implied that she only submitted out of consideration for the life of the Cabinet. (*Letters*, ii. 397.) The Prime Minister, in an admirable attempt to steer straight between the Queen and her Minister, recalled the many instances on which the latter had yielded to remonstrance; reminded her that Palmerston had been Foreign Minister from 1830 to 1834 and again from 1835 to 1841, and so for fifteen years represented Whig Foreign Policy with the approval of a large portion of the country, and argued that some of the good opinion of the offended Emperors was a fair price to pay for the retention of the goodwill of the English people. (*ib.* ii. 398, November 21, 1851.) The Queen in reply expressed the hope that the Cabinet would make that careful inquiry into the justice of her complaint which she was sorry to miss altogether in Lord John's answer; argued fairly that it was not a question of whether she pleased the Emperor of Austria or not, but whether she gave him a just cause of complaint; and she declared that she had *every reason to believe* that Palmerston had seen Kossuth after all. (*ib.* ii. 400.) And on November 28, 1851, Palmerston apologised through Lord John for the grave annoyance he had caused the Queen. The struggle was nearing an end.

It came a few weeks later, when Napoleon's *coup d'état* startled the world. Though Lord Normanby in Paris was ordered to identify the country with absolute neutrality, Palmerston in conversation with Walewski, the French Ambassador, frankly expressed approval of Napoleon's action. The Queen was highly indignant, writing to Lord

John on December 13 that she could not believe the truth of the story. She would have pressed for his instant dismissal, had not Stockmar "very wisely advised her to do nothing, but to wait for Lord John Russell's coming to her, as he did," and himself advised Palmerston's dismissal. (*Greville*, vi. 443.) This time Lord John thought himself "compelled to write to Lord Palmerston in the most decisive terms," and on December 19 he advised the Queen to make a change, and suggested Lord Granville as the best successor. The Queen accordingly accepted the resignation, but with respect to a successor felt obliged to state "that after the sad experience which she had just had of the difficulties, annoyances, and dangers to which the Sovereign is exposed by the personal character and qualities of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, she must reserve to herself the unfettered right to approve or disapprove the choice of a Minister for the Office." And thus, by a word, passed to the Crown the real control of the nation's destinies in its relation to foreign countries: the Prime Minister's advice was to cease to count in the matter. The Queen and Prince had an audience with Lord John on December 23, and when Lord John gave it as the opinion of the whole Cabinet that the Foreign Office should first be offered to Lord Clarendon, she protested that the appointment did not rest with the Cabinet, but with herself and the Prime Minister, who could only construct his Government with her approval. Subject to that, it was at her desire that Lord Clarendon had the first offer, and on his refusal Lord Granville was appointed, and so continued till on the change of Government in 1852 Lord Malmesbury became Foreign Secretary.

The relief to the Queen was infinite at this successful termination of the five years' struggle. On December 23 she wrote to her uncle: "I have the greatest pleasure in announcing to you a piece of news which I know will give you as much satisfaction as it does to us, and will do to the *whole* of the world. *Lord Palmerston* is *no longer Foreign Secretary*—and Lord Granville is already named his successor!! He had become of late really quite reckless." (*Letters*. ii. 417.)

The real philosophy of this famous episode was that given by the Prince to Napoleon at Boulogne in 1854. About the

conversation with Walewski "the Queen asked for an explanation from Lord John Russell, then Prime Minister, who, after having had to wait several days, received at last so rude an answer that he had to send Lord Palmerston his dismissal. This rendered it impossible for the Queen to have him again for Foreign Secretary. But the Queen and myself had long been at variance with Lord Palmerston as to the main principles of his foreign policy, which was even an exaggeration of Mr. Canning's celebrated speech in December 1826." He then went on to explain how the difference between them lay in their attitude to the autocratic Governments of the Continent. (*Martin*, iii. 112.)

The whole question of the beaten Minister's misdoings came before the tribunal of Parliament on February 3, 1852, when Lord Palmerston in reply to Lord John, who read with fatal effect the Queen's letter of August 12, 1850, made the best defence he could of his conduct. Mr. Disraeli compared the fallen statesman to a "beaten fox." (*Letters*, ii. 440.) But within a few weeks the beaten fox had his revenge, the revenge Lord John had always anticipated. For on February 20 he carried an amendment on the Government Militia Bill, and so brought Lord John Russell's Ministry to an end and Lord Derby's to a beginning.

In later years Lord John Russell came to think that he had been too hasty in the dismissal of Palmerston: he should have seen him personally, and persuaded him to submit to the Queen's wishes. (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 142.) But would the Court have accepted any submission? In any case the break-up of the Whig Ministry was most unfortunate; for had the Court not obtained, after the brief Tory interregnum, its long-desired Coalition Government under Lord Aberdeen, there would probably have been no Crimean War. And with regard to the particular incident of approval of the *coup d'état*, Lord Palmerston took the best means at his disposal for averting the otherwise almost inevitable war between France and England to which the English Press was then heading. In the division of opinion between Palmerston and the Queen and the Prince all the weight of experience was on Palmerston's side, and their victory over him was the victory of anti-liberal principles in

foreign policy. And it was won at the expense of the nation by the Court's successful assertion of its claim to a dominant control over foreign affairs. Of the Parliament that was behind the Minister or of the public that was behind Parliament there is no evidence derivable from the Royal correspondence that the Court took the smallest account. Foreign policy came to be considered as a matter to be solely or mainly directed by the Crown, and if the Crown and the country took divergent views it was the views of the Crown that had the right to prevail. The story of Lord Palmerston's tenure of the Foreign Office entirely disposes of the idea that in those most important departments of national interests our system of Constitutional Monarchy has worked with anything like the smoothness that common opinion ascribes to it. Whether any other system would have worked more smoothly is a fair matter of speculation.

CHAPTER V

The Russian War Time

The years of the Crimean War (1854–56) supply several curious illustrations of the working of our institutions in war-time. And not the least of them was the Press attack on the Prince Consort which preceded the war. The *Daily News*, the *Morning Herald*, the *Standard*, and the *Morning Advertiser* were specially virulent against him, the *Advertiser* sometimes indulging in as many as five or six articles a day on the subject. (*Greville*, vii. 127.) "Savage libels," said Greville, who declared that he never remembered anything more atrocious or more unjust. (January 15, 1854.) It was chiefly imputed to the Prince that he took the Austrian and Russian side against France on the Eastern question, and used his influence with the Government against the Turks. It became unsafe for him to show himself in public, the attacks continuing till within ten days of the opening of Parliament, and till the very day in the case of the *Morning Advertiser*. But perhaps the strangest thing in the whole story is that Greville should have accepted the surmise, that the whole of this Press campaign was organised and financed by Napoleon III. and his ambassador, Count Walewski, with a political object. (vii. 135.) That the Emperor did sometimes use our Press for his own purposes is proved by Walewski's admission on November 2, 1852, that "the French Government paid the *Morning Post*, and that he saw Borthwick, the editor, every day." (Malmesbury's *Memoirs*, i. 362, and ii. 107, 151, 164.) Surely a rather disagreeable fact.

Open discussion in Parliament so far dispelled the attacks on the Prince that on February 4, 1854, Lord Aberdeen, the Prime Minister, could write and assure him that the whole edifice of falsehood and misrepresentation had been

completely overthrown. The Queen wrote to Stockmar on April 15, 1854, that "the black time when foul calumny strove to blind our deluded people vanished from the hour Parliament spoke of it." (*Letters*, iii. 3.)

But that public opinion was rather silenced than satisfied is shown by an incident that occurred in the following year. Roebuck's Committee to inquire into the state of the Army wished to examine the Prince, and Roebuck horrified the Duke of Newcastle by telling him of the existence in the Committee of a belief in a determination on the part of the Prince that the Crimean expedition should fail. The Duke expressed his annoyance at the wickedness and folly of such a belief. (*Martin*, iii. 219–21.) Yet the Prince could justly boast that during his fifteen years in the country he had not given a human soul the right to impute to him any want of sincerity or patriotism, and that he and the Queen had had no other interest, thought, or desire than the general honour and power of the country.

The Prince's papers on the Eastern Question alone from 1853–57 fill fifty folio volumes, so that abundant testimony remains of his thoughts and influence on the Russian War. But from what Sir Theodore Martin has garnered from this vast mass there is enough to show that he shared the common and popular view of his day. "All Europe, Belgium and Germany included," he wrote to King Leopold on July 20, 1854, "have the greatest interest in the integrity and independence of the Porte being secured for the future, but a still greater in Russia being defeated and chastised." (*ib.* iii. 21.) Which latter had been precisely Stockmar's governing wish for forty years since 1815. Writing on October 23, 1854, to the future William I. of Germany of the popular cry "for the annihilation of Russia," he did not dissociate himself from this futile desire.

Both the Prince and Stockmar were greatly mortified that all their exhortations to Prussia and Austria to join in the war had no effect. How was Stockmar's forty years' wish for the humbling of Russia to be realised without the aid of these obstinate Powers? And how was Prussia to become a Great Power save through a successful war? In 1852 Stockmar thus wrote to a Prussian of high standing:

"*À propos* of being a Great Power, you must make up your mind whether you are and really wish to be one or not. Many will not allow, and for myself I do not believe that you really are. But you aspire to being one, and in my view justly and of necessity, and the task before you is to work out this pretension and to give it reality, which you can only do by a successful war. . . . Away then with all attempts at neutrality, and give yourselves heart and soul to find out how the war, which is essential to you, may be undertaken." (*Letters*, ii. 456.) And then, when the chance came, Prussia would not take it! King Frederic William IV. defended his neutrality against all tempters. And there was good sense in his reply to the Queen on May 24, 1854: "I have recognised it as my duty before God to preserve, for my people and my provinces, peace, *because I recognise Peace as a blessing and War as a curse.*" (*ib.* iii. 37.) But this was not Stockmar's philosophy. And it must remain a matter of opinion whether the Queen was right when she wrote to her uncle, Leopold, on January 29, 1856: "What we have said from the beginning, and what I have *repeated* a *hundred times if Prussia* and *Austria* had held *strong* and *decided* language *to Russia* in '53, we should *never* have had *this war.* (*ib.* iii.)

That the Court itself had desired peace is shown by such a letter as that of November 5, 1853, from the Queen to Lord Aberdeen, in which, in reference to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe's letters shown to her the previous day by Lord Clarendon, she remarks that "they exhibit clearly on his part a *desire* for war, and to drag us into it. . . . It becomes a serious question whether we are justified in allowing Lord Stratford any longer to remain in a situation which gives him the means of frustrating all our efforts for peace." (*ib.* ii. 560.) But it is possible that the incessant memoranda with which the Prince pressed his views and advice on Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon contributed less than he hoped to the successful conduct of the negotiations which preceded the outbreak of war.

Once engaged in the Crimean War, the Court became as deaf as the country generally to all counsels of moderation. And this attitude was illustrated by an extraordinary in-

cident. On June 19, 1854, Lord Lyndhurst, speaking in the House of Lords, in the course of a conventional philippic against Russia, declared that the Russian Empire had doubled itself within the previous fifty years. This so nettled Lord Aberdeen that in his reply he laid stress on the fact that at the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, when the Russians were within fifty miles of Constantinople, Russia acquired not an inch of Turkish territory in Europe, nor had she in the subsequent twenty-five years. His speech, though an admirable one in other respects, ran so counter to the anger of the hour that the Queen wrote to remonstrate. She told him that his speech had caused her "very great uneasiness." She warned him that the public was "impatient and annoyed to hear at this moment the first Minister of the Crown enter into an *impartial* examination of the Emperor of Russia's character and conduct," and hoped that in vindicating his fault in a later speech he would not "undertake the ungrateful and injurious task of vindicating the Emperor of Russia from any of the exaggerated charges brought against him and his policy at a time when there is enough in it to make us fight with all might against it." (*ib.* iii. 44.) And in a speech of that same day Lord Aberdeen made a speech to explain away the offence he had given. So fatal is war both to common notions of justice and to constitutional liberty that we actually find the Queen not only protesting against an *impartial* view of an enemy's case and defending *exaggerated charges* against him, but also dictating to her first Minister on the expression of his opinion as imperiously as any autocrat might have done in the most absolute monarchy.

The war played havoc with our politics. On January 24, 1855, Lord John Russell's resignation came with the suddenness of a thunderbolt, and the immediate resignation of the whole Aberdeen Cabinet was only averted by the Queen's refusal to accept their resignation as "unjust towards herself," injurious to the character of Ministers, and "indefensible as regards the country." (Argyll's *Autobiography*, i. 518.) Then came the defeat of the Government on January 30 by a majority of 157; the reconstruction of the Cabinet under Lord Palmerston; the reluctant adherence to it of

the Peelites under Gladstone on February 18; followed by their speedy resignation on February 21. After this exciting crisis in the very middle of the Crimean War, the Queen was forced to make Lord Palmerston her first Minister. "I had no other alternative," she lamented on February 6, 1855, to her uncle Leopold. "The Whigs *will* join with him, and I have got hopes *also* the Peelites, which would be very important, and would tend to allay the *alarm* which his name will, I fear, produce abroad." (*Letters*, iii. 128.)

Mr. Disraeli's description of Lord Palmerston when he became Prime Minister of England was as follows: "really an impostor, utterly exhausted, and at the best only ginger beer and not champagne, and now an old painted pantaloon, very deaf, very blind, and with false teeth." (February 2, 1855, *Life*, iii. 567.) Yet he remained at his post with but little intermission till his death in 1865.

On the formation of the new Government Lord Palmerston wrote a friendly letter to the Emperor Napoleon, with a view to fortifying the alliance between the two countries. But the letter gave the Court "great uneasiness," for "the sort of private correspondence which Lord Palmerston means to establish with the Emperor Napoleon is a novel and unconstitutional practice." (February 11, 1855, *Letters*, iii. 134.)

Much to Greville's vexation, the *Times* went into "furious opposition" to the Palmerston Government. Greville was "to the last degree shocked and disgusted at its conduct and the enormous mischief it was endeavouring to do." (vii. 246.) He thought the Constitution itself in danger, writing on February 19: "We have never seen . . . such a thorough confusion and political chaos, or the public mind so completely disturbed and dissatisfied, and so puzzled how to arrive at any just conclusion as to the past, the present, or the future." (*ib.* vii. 247.) Yet the Queen, he allowed, had "behaved with an admirable sense of her constitutional responsibilities" in sending first for Lord Derby, then for Lord Lansdowne, then for Lord John, and last of all for Lord Palmerston. (*ib.* vii. 238.)

A chance of peace came in 1855, when Lord John Russell as our plenipotentiary and Drouyn de Lluys on behalf of

France attended the Conference at Vienna to discuss terms on the basis of the Four Points, of which the most difficult concerned the future of the Black Sea. When Russia refused to surrender her preponderance in that sea, Austria made further suggestions, which both plenipotentiaries thought acceptable, but which were rejected by their respective Governments. "How Lord John Russell," wrote the Queen to Lord Clarendon on April 25, "can recommend such proposals to our acceptance is beyond our comprehension." On May 3, the Prince addressed a memorandum to the Cabinet, in which he proposed a defensive European League against Russia in defence of Turkey: any question between Turkey and another Power was to be brought before a European tribunal, and any attempt by any single Power to coerce Turkey was to be a *casus belli* for the rest of the League. This, he thought, would place a moral bar on the kind of protectorate which Russia had exercised over Central Europe and particularly over Germany. Stockmar, who had spent the winter in England, left on May 5, and the Prince, writing to him on the 8th, said, in reference to this memorandum: "Your ideas have been developed in it. I would I could have submitted it to yourself first." (*Martin*, iii. 274.) To the Prince, Stockmar's approval counted for more than any Prime Minister's, and one may guess that it was Stockmar's counsel that had most influence in the prolongation of the war for another year. Russia had not been sufficiently punished to meet Stockmar's views for the strengthening of Germany.

The same spirit that had led the Queen to interfere with freedom of speech in the House of Lords by her reproval of Lord Aberdeen showed itself in the Court's attitude to the few men of more humanity than influence who constituted the Peace Party. Yet many who had wished for war in 1854 wished it over in 1855. Lord Granville, who as Chancellor of the Duchy in the Ministry which had committed us to war, was now, as President of the Council, among the penitents. But probably he would not have said from a platform what he wrote to the Duke of Argyll on May 3, 1855: It was "with sorrow and almost with shame" that he personally accepted the Austrian proposals of peace.

"The nation," he said, "had been lashed by Parliamentary speeches, by public meetings, and by the Press into the most extravagant expectations of what we were to attempt and what we were to achieve"; so that the general feeling about peace was bound to be one of disappointment and mortification. But "the deaths of brave men and distinguished officers, falling in affairs which have absolutely no result, press upon us the duty of considering whether it is absolutely necessary to continue this war." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 106–8.)

The Court, of course, thought it was, its military environment secluding it entirely from all but the most bellicose section of the community. Bright and Cobden had long been politically distasteful to the Queen and Prince, and they became more so through the war. Lord John Russell's failure to form a Ministry at the close of 1845 owing to the refusal of Lord Grey to join a Government with Palmerston again at the Foreign Office, was the great disappointment of his life, for it robbed him of the credit of repealing the Corn Laws (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 530); and it was in the course of these negotiations that the Prince noted with horror that Lord Grey "wanted Mr. Cobden to be in the Cabinet!!!" (*Letters*, ii. 71, December 20, 1845.) And when Peel in his last speech on the Corn Law Repeal specially praised Cobden as the real author of the measure, thereby making it difficult for the new Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, not to offer Cobden an office, the Queen's comment to her uncle was: "The only thing to be regretted, and I do not know exactly *why* he (Peel) did it (though we *can* guess), was his praise of Cobden, which has shocked people a good deal." (*ib.* ii. 104, July 7, 1846.) When on October 14, 1847, Lord John Russell proposed that this public agitator should be President of the Poor Law Commission with a seat in the Cabinet, the Queen replied that, whilst admitting his qualifications, she felt that "the elevation to the Cabinet directly from Covent Garden (the scene of the Free Trade meetings) strikes her as a very serious step, calculated to cause much dissatisfaction in many quarters, and setting a dangerous example to agitators in general (for his main reputation Mr. Cobden gained as a successful agitator)." She therefore thought it best that he should only be promoted to

the Cabinet after service on the Commission. (*ib.* ii. 155.)

Bright was in still worse odour than his friend. When Palmerston formed his second Ministry in July 1859, he offered Cobden the Board of Trade, pointing out in vain that they both favoured neutrality in the Italian war then raging, however much they might have differed in the past; but he would make no such offer to Bright, on account of his speeches, though he did suggest to the Queen that, if Bright were made a Privy Councillor, the honour might "turn his thoughts and feelings into better channels." The Queen, however, would have him on no terms. "It would be impossible to allege any service Mr. Bright had rendered, and if the honour were looked upon as a reward for his systematic attack on the institutions of the country, a very erroneous impression might be produced as to the feeling which the Queen or her Government entertained towards these institutions." (*ib.* iii. 446, July 2, 1859.)

Their opposition, therefore, in 1855 to the fruitless war only intensified the Court's dislike of them. But more powerful statesmen came round to their side, the foremost of them Mr. Gladstone. Lord Aberdeen's expression of compunction "for having allowed the country to be dragged without adequate cause into the war," and his declaration that it would weigh on his conscience for his life (*Morley*, i. 536, 537), doubtless weighed much with him; but by January 1855 the professed objects of the war had been virtually obtained by the Czar's acceptance of three out of the four points for which we contended. (*ib.* i. 545.)

And no sooner had the events of February released him from the trammels of office than Gladstone threw all his powers into the cause of peace; made two of the greatest speeches of his career, one of which was denounced as "the most unpatriotic speech ever heard within the walls of Parliament"; and found it difficult to believe, from being assured of it on all sides, that he was not the greatest scoundrel on earth. (*ib.* i. 548, 549.)

The Court frowned as sternly as the crowd on the growing Peace Party. In a letter to Stockmar of May 20, 1855, the Prince expressed his unlimited contempt for them: "The

Peace Party—Bright, etc.—bring forward a motion this evening for peace *à tout prix*, to which the Peelites (with Gladstone and Graham at their head) will give their adherence!!, and which Lord Grey is to follow up by a motion to the same effect in the Upper House, a motion which has been concerted with Aberdeen. Thus these people will present a public confirmation of all the charges which have been made against them for the last ten years." (*Martin*, iii. 282.)

On June 3, the Prince wrote a strong letter to Lord Aberdeen, protesting against the line taken by his former friends and colleagues, except the Duke of Newcastle, on the war question, a line which had caused the Queen and himself great anxiety. (*ib.* iii. 289–91.) The letter happily did not deter either Sir James Graham or Sidney Herbert from speaking for peace in the next day's debate; but not even George III. had ever attempted a grosser violation of the freedom of Parliamentary speech. All the Court thought of was to please Stockmar, to whom the Prince wrote on June 7 about the debate he had vainly tried to influence: "As you will have seen, Cobden and Graham have made Russian speeches. I wrote a fiery letter to Aberdeen." (*ib.* iii. 292.)

At a later date, when the General Election in the spring of 1857 had returned Lord Palmerston to power with an increased majority as a sign of the country's approval of his "spirited policy" towards China, no one was more delighted than the Prince over the defeat of the Peace Party. He thus wrote to the Duke of Coburg on April 9, 1857: "The Ministers have gained 24 counties and 20 towns, and the apostles of peace have been turned out by the people neck and crop. Not because the people do not love peace, but because they love their own importance and their own honour, and will not submit to be tyrannised over by the peace at any price people." (*ib.* iv. 26.)

The common interest of the Crimean War served to bring the Court and the Prime Minister into more harmonious relations. But, as Lord Clarendon told Lord Granville on April 25, 1855, though the Queen and Prince meant to treat Lord Palmerston with confidence, the old mistrust still haunted them. On September 16, 1855, he wrote: "I

think they are unfair about Palmerston, though he has done nothing to justify this since he has been in office." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 105, 120.) But by December 26, 1855, Greville could write that Palmerston was now "on very good terms with the Queen, which is, though he doesn't know it, attributable to Clarendon's constant endeavour to reconcile her to him."

Nevertheless, despite all we had done in the war for the cause of public law and the rights of weaker nationalities, we had failed to earn either the love or the gratitude of the world. "We know very well," the Prince wrote to King Leopold on February 16, 1856, "that England is hated all over the Continent"; and Lord Clarendon gave the same testimony, saying that it was impossible to conceive the hatred with which Palmerston was regarded all over Germany . . . as much on the part of the people as of the Government, both thinking they had been deceived and thrown over by him." (*Greville*, vii. 320.)

Towards the end of 1855 peace came within sight. Austria came forward with four fresh points, of which the most important was the neutralisation of the Black Sea, instead of the former proposal prohibitive of Russia's enjoying preponderance in it. The Queen was favourably disposed to the proposals, as was also Clarendon. (*Argyll*, i. 593.) But the French Emperor by his speech at Paris on November 15, in which he declared that "France had no hatreds," gave the real impetus to peace. Lord Cowley, our ambassador at Paris, spoke of this speech as having "done all the mischief he expected"; but Lord Cowley was a war fanatic, "so hot about the war that he seemed almost to dread peace, as in itself a horrible event and a great calamity." (*ib.* i. 598.) The "strong language" of the Emperor decided the Cabinet of November 20 to assent to Austria's making these fresh proposals (*ib.* i. 596), and when the Duke of Argyll went to Windsor on November 21 to kiss hands on changing from the post of Privy Seal to that of the Post Office he rejoiced to find both the Queen and the Prince approved on the whole of the Cabinet's decision. (*ib.* i. 599.) On December 16 the news came that the Austrian Emperor had accepted the English modifications of his ultimatum, and

sent it to Petrograd ; and on January 16, 1856, the news came that Russia had accepted the same.

But the Queen's letters show that her approval of the fresh peace proposals was very superficial. The only peace since 1700 that was ever popular in England was that of Paris in 1814 ; the peaces of Utrecht in 1713, of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, of Paris in 1763, of Versailles in 1783, of Amiens in 1802, were denounced at the time as ignominious and premature ; and so it was sure to be with any peace that concluded the Crimean War. The Queen, sharing the common opinion described by Greville that it would " prove quite easy to crumple up Russia and to reduce her to accept such terms as we chose to impose on her " (vii. 202), was hard to reconcile to the idea of peace. On January 15, 1856, she wrote to Lord Clarendon that she could not conceal from him *her own* feelings and wishes at the moment. " They cannot be for peace *now*, for she is *convinced* that this country would *not* stand in the eyes of Europe as she *ought*, and as the Queen is convinced she *would* after *this* year's campaign. The honour and glory of her dear Army is as *near* her heart as almost anything, and she cannot *bear* the thought that ' the failure of the Redan ' should be our *last fait d'armes*, and it would cost her more than words can express to conclude a peace with *this* as the end. However, what is best and wisest must be done." (*Letters*, iii. 207, January 15, 1856.) And when the Peace Conferences were about to begin at Paris, she wrote to her uncle on February 12 that she would say nothing about them, as she had " too strong feelings to speak upon the subject." (*ib.* iii. 217.) She cherished the vain ideal of wishing for no peace that would fall short of rendering another such war impossible. As she expressed it to her uncle : " England's policy throughout has been the *same*, *singularly unselfish*, and *solely* actuated by the *desire* of *seeing Europe saved* from the *arrogant* and *dangerous pretensions* of that *barbarous power* Russia, and of having such safeguards established for the future, which may ensure us against a *repetition* of similar *untoward events*. (*ib.* iii. 215, January 1856.)

And that great war-engine, the Press, was on the same side. " The intelligence of peace at hand," wrote Greville

on January 22, 1856, "gives no satisfaction here, and the whole Press is violent against it, and thunders away against Russia and Austria, warns the people not to expect peace, and invites them to go on with the war. There seems little occasion for this . . . the Press has succeeded in inoculating the public with such an eager desire for war that there appears a general regret at the notion of making peace." And when on January 31 the Queen's Speech announced the preliminaries of peace, his comment was: "Who would ever have thought that tidings of peace would produce a general sentiment of disappointment and dissatisfaction in the nation?" (viii. 9, 12.) And when the Peace Conference had begun at Paris it was Greville's opinion that, if Lord Clarendon were to return and to announce that the failure of negotiations necessitated the continuance of the war, "he would be hailed with the greatest enthusiasm, and the ardour for war would break out with redoubled force." (*ib.* viii. 19.) But when peace was actually signed at the end of March, the news was received joyfully, and the newspapers were "reasonable enough, except the *Sun*, which appeared in deep mourning and with a violent tirade against peace." (*ib.* viii. 41.) Lord Granville, writing to Lord Canning on April 29, 1856, records the curious fact that the proclamation of Peace that morning was hissed at Temple Bar. (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 178.)

When at last Peace was made, it pleased the Court as little as the rest of the nation. The Prince, Stockmar, and the public had nursed such extravagant hopes that disappointment was the inevitable consequence of their disillusion. A more thorough chastisement had been hoped for. Lord Harrowby in the Cabinet itself had expressed the desire of thousands for the actual dismemberment of Russia. (*Argyll*, i. 558.) Lord Clarendon and Lord Palmerston had wished to extend the objects of the war to a guarantee of the whole possessions of Norway and Sweden against Russia. (*ib.* i. 564, 591, 592.) That country was to be incapacitated for future aggression by the loss of her frontier territories in Finland, Poland, and Georgia; and on December 19, 1855, Admiral Dundas had explained to a War Committee how it was hoped to attack the great arsenal at Cronstadt

within the course of the coming year. (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 132.)

So it was natural that the Prince should write of the Peace to Stockmar on March 21, 1856, that "it was not such a Peace as we could have wished," though infinitely preferable to a continuance of the war; and the Queen, writing to congratulate her ally Napoleon on April 3, confessed to sharing the feeling of the majority of her people "that this peace was perhaps a little premature." (*Martin*, iii. 473.) On March 6 she had written to Lord Palmerston: "With reference to Lord Clarendon's letter, the Queen must say that she, though *very reluctantly*, shares his opinion that we have no choice *now* but to accept the Peace, even if it is not all we could desire, and if another campaign might have got us better terms." (*Letters*, iii. 473.) On March 31 she wrote to him that "much as the Queen dislikes the idea of *Peace*, she has become reconciled to it, by the conviction that France either would not have continued the war, or continued it in such a manner that *no* glory could have been hoped for for us." And on April 1 she wrote to her uncle in actual praise of the peace and still more of Lord Clarendon for having effected it. (*ib.* iii. 235.) It was the supreme merit of the Queen that her reason always came readily to her aid and triumphed over sentiment.

The Court used its influence beneficently in adopting this sensible view about the Peace; for the opposition to it remained strong in the country. Lord Malmesbury on May 5 spoke for an hour against the Treaty of Paris, and Lord Derby ended a speech against it by calling it the "capitulation" of Paris. (Malmesbury's *Memoirs*, ii. 47.) Writing to her uncle next day the Queen said, "The Opposition have taken the line of disapproving the Peace and showing great hostility to Russia." (*Letters*, iii. 241.) Lord Derby in a letter to Lord Malmesbury of August 25, 1856, ventured on the unfortunate prediction that it would not be long before the Government would be heartily ashamed of the terms and results of the Peace they had "patched up." (*Malmesbury*, ii. 51.) The "patched-up" Peace lasted sixty years, and is still vigorous. A patched-up Peace is better than a continued war, and of this Lord Palmerston happily had no difficulty

in convincing the Queen. He argued with her that, though the Peace was of no certain durability, it was a settlement "satisfactory for the present," and probably for many years, of questions full of danger for Europe. We might have gained more brilliant successes, had the war continued, but any additional security against future aggressions by Russia could only have been gained by continuing the war to a point beyond the possible endurance of the Allies or the goodwill of the Queen's own subjects. (*Letters*, iii. 233.) As a matter of fact, Lord Palmerston seems only to have expected a life of seven or ten years for the stipulations affecting the Black Sea, from which the Conference of London relieved Russia in November 1870. (Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 349.)

Every war, by the nature of things, tends to strengthen the Executive at the expense of the Legislature, and tries to the utmost all the liberties of a people. In the summer of 1855 the Prince Consort made his famous speech at Trinity House, in which he spoke of Constitutional Government as under a heavy trial. Stockmar himself found fault with him for having spoken as if he were at heart opposed to representative Government. Stockmar's view was that "the assertion that the advantages of the Constitutional system outweighed its disadvantages was only true so far as a free Constitution developed a greater amount of material or moral force than the forces of despotic Government" (*Martin*, iii. 299): which would seem to mean that a strong military autocracy might be preferable to a democracy. The Prince admitted that his omission of any qualification had been accidental on his part.

The incident gave rise to some public disquiet, which was not without justification. For the Prince had become "to all intents and purposes King," though acting entirely in the Queen's name. (*Greville*, viii. 128.) All his views, said Greville, were those of a Constitutional Sovereign, whilst at the same time he made "the Crown an entity." Lord Clarendon vouched for the Prince's having written some of the ablest papers he had ever read. But the great abilities of the Prince are quite compatible with his having made the Crown too much of an entity, and having been too impatient of Parliamentary methods. Yet with this reservation both

he and Stockmar were never disloyal to representative Government; a proof of this is that in Germany Stockmar was regarded with terror for his Liberalism. When in August 1858 he was at Berlin with the Queen and the Prince, his presence was viewed with "rancorous suspicion" by the aristocratic party, who held in abhorrence a man of known advocacy of Constitutional Government in Germany (*Martin*, iv. 318); and when in December 1858 only 70 out of 350 members elected to the Prussian Chamber belonged to the reactionary party, no one was more delighted than the Prince Consort. (*ib.* iv. 326.)

Therefore, it was in every way unfortunate that the Press continued to make his life a burden to the Prince; especially the *Times*, which was violently anti-German. The Press of that day, in fact, prepared the ground for the war which was to break out in 1914. When the Princess Royal became engaged to the future German Emperor Frederick, the *Times* of October 3, 1855, wrote an article, not only inconsiderate to the Queen and her Consort, but "insulting to the Prussian King and nation, and indeed to all Germany." This article was one of a series by which the *Times* had done its best to make England detested throughout Germany, and the Prince, writing to Stockmar about it, described it as "at once truly scandalous in itself and degrading to the country, with a view to provoke hostile public opinion." (*ib.* iii. 374–5.)

The Duchess of Manchester, writing from Hanover to the Queen in November 1858, and referring to the friendliness shown by Germans of all classes towards the strangers, especially to English, at some manœuvres on the Rhine, said that it made her "quite ashamed of those wanton attacks" which the *Times* always made on Prussia, and which were read and copied into all the Prussian papers. (*Queen's Letters*, iii. 384.)

Such articles naturally embittered relations between England and Prussia, and in September 1860, when the Queen and Prince were travelling in Germany, an incident occurred which even threatened war. Captain Macdonald, after being turned out of a train at Bonn by the railway authorities, was imprisoned and fined. Whereupon Lord

Palmerston wrote a memorandum that, unless the judge who sentenced the Captain were at once cashiered and punished, and reparation made to the Captain, diplomatic relations with Prussia would be broken off. The affair became the subject of a Blue Book; it was discussed in Parliament and in the Prussian Chambers, and the Prince described as "studiously insulting" an article in the *Times* of May 8, 1861, which much intensified the anger in Berlin at a speech of Lord Palmerston, in which he described the action of Prussia as a blunder as well as a crime. (*ib.* v. 347.) For months the incessant attacks of the *Times* on Prussia and everything Prussian were a source of great vexation to the Prince, who on October 24, 1860, thus wrote to his daughter in Berlin: "What abominable articles the *Times* has against Prussia. That of yesterday on Warsaw and Schleinitz is positively wicked. It is the Bonn story, which continues to operate, and a total estrangement between the two countries may ensue, if a newspaper war be kept up for some time between the two nations." (*Martin*, v. 229.) The Prince, not without justice, in the last years of his life viewed with some alarm the "irritating, bold, and offensive tone adopted by an influential section of the English Press towards Prussia." (*ib.* v. 347.) The Queen, too, foreseeing the danger which the *Times* was creating for the future, thus wrote to Lord Palmerston on October 25, 1861: "The Queen has long seen with deep regret the persevering efforts made by the *Times*, which leads the rest of our Press, in attacking, vilifying, and abusing everything German, and particularly everything Prussian. That journal had since years shown the same bias, but it is since the Macdonald affair of last year that it has assumed that tone of virulence which could not fail to produce the deepest indignation amongst the people of Germany, and by degrees estrange the feelings of the people of this country from Germany. . . . National hatred between these two peoples is a real political calamity for both." (*Letters*, iii. 587.) Lord Palmerston accordingly wrote to Mr. Delane, who promised to give the Prussians a "respite" from advice, and excused the offending articles on the plea of the King of Prussia's anachronistic sentiments about the Divine Right of Kings uttered at his Coronation.

When Lord Clarendon was going to Berlin on the occasion of the Coronation as King of Prussia of the late Prince Regent, the Prince wrote to him on October 8, 1861 : " You will find feeling in Germany very bitter against us, less amongst the Cabinets than the people, owing chiefly to the systematic attacks on and vilification of everything German by our Press for the last twelve months ; together with the fact that every anti-German movement is received with enthusiasm here." Germany, he wrote, would be annihilated if she lost Venice, Galicia, Hungary, Posen, and Holstein, and was surrounded instead by hostile nations under the control of France. Yet this was what so-called public opinion in England was aiming at and desiring. (*Martin*, v. 393.)

In his last letter to Stockmar from Balmoral of October 14, 1861, he complained that in foreign politics " the Press, and particularly the *Times*, is doing all it can to alienate England and Germany from each other as widely as possible ; and a formal crusade is in progress against Prussia as it formerly was against Naples. To what end ? Why ? I have lost my wits puzzling over these questions. One end has been thereby gained, for here animosity is kindled against Germany, and there downright hatred against England." (*ib.* v. 405.)

Nor had Lord Clarendon been many days in Prussia before he discovered the truth of the Prince's warning. He became deeply concerned at the bad effect produced by the *Times* articles, and on October 21, 1861, in a letter to the Queen, spoke of " the enormous and wanton mischief done by the articles in the *Times*, which offended the whole nation, and particularly the Army." The mischief so done he described as " incalculable," and it was probably his suggestion that the Queen should call Lord Palmerston's attention to it which led to an improvement of tone. (*ib.* v. 399, 400.)

And the tragedy of it was that, with this bad feeling engendered between England and Germany, the Prince, who had always aimed at their mutual friendship, was swept from the scene. Great as was the power his position gave him, the power of the Press proved greater. It sowed the dragon's teeth of 1914.

CHAPTER VI

The Queen and the Italian Revolution

The close connection between home and foreign politics is well shown by the incident of Orsini's attempt on the life of Napoleon, with which the year 1858 began. Swift panic and anger seized both England and France, as certain French colonels wrote insolently of a country which harboured and protected revolutionary assassins, and the English Press flared up in response. Persigny, the French ambassador, was "much alarmed at the state of public feeling with respect to the refugees," and said that, in default of concessions by England, war was inevitable. (Malmesbury's *Memoirs*, ii. 94.) On February 2 Greville described our Foreign Minister, Lord Clarendon, as haunted with the fear of the French marching 50,000 men at a moment's notice to Cherbourg, and being transported across the Channel by abundant war steamers, whilst we had neither soldiers nor ships to defend us against them. (viii. 161.) No amount of command of the sea ever lessens such fears; and few there then were who, like Lord Malmesbury, from long acquaintance with the Emperor trusted in his good sense and in his "undoubted disposition" to keep the peace with England. (*Memoirs*, ii. 97.)

Lord Palmerston, anxious to calm the storm, brought in a Conspiracy Bill in the sense desired by the French, but was beaten on February 19 by a majority of 19 on Milner Gibson's amendment. Though he is said to have made an intemperate speech, and even to have shaken his fist at the Manchester clique, he failed to save the Government; for, although the Queen begged Lord Palmerston to reconsider his resignation, the Cabinet insisted on it, and thus the Conservatives came into power under Lord Derby for the

second time, with Lord Malmesbury for Foreign Minister in the place of Lord Clarendon.

But the war fever continued to rage. On February 21, 1858, a crowd of 20,000 went to Hyde Park, and shouted, "Down with the French!" (*Martin*, iv. 192.) Persigny was "furious" at the change of Government, and thwarted Lord Malmesbury's efforts for better relations between the angry countries; whilst the Press did its best to keep the anger alive. On March 20 Lord Derby begged Greville to use his influence with the *Times* to abstain from articles about France which "provoked the French to madness"; Delane's answer being that it was hard to leave the French Press unanswered. (viii. 182.) But within three weeks the good sense of Lord Malmesbury on the one side and of Walewski on the other effected a settlement, and the soreness that remained was still further reduced by the wisdom shown by the Emperor in sending the Duc de Malokoff, of Crimean fame, to supersede Persigny at the Court of St. James's.

For the time the completeness of Palmerston's fall might have led his adversaries to hope that it would prove final. The Prince, writing to Stockmar on February 22, described him as having become "the most unpopular of men," and as hooted down in the Commons after his defeat. (*ib.* iv. 192.) Writing again on September 4 he spoke of Palmerston's extraordinary unpopularity as "the feature" of the Session: "The House would hardly listen to him if he spoke, and frequently received him with hooting." The Prince gloated over his fall. He wondered how "the man who was without rhyme or reason stamped as the only *English* statesman, the champion of liberty, the man of the people, etc. etc., now without his having changed in one respect, having still the same virtues and the same faults that he always had, young and vigorous in his seventy-fifth year, and having succeeded in his policy, is now considered the man of intrigue, past his work, etc. etc.—in fact, hated! and this throughout the country." (*Letters*, iii. 381.)

Suspicions of Napoleon revived with full force in 1859, when collision between Austria and France in Italy was clearly imminent. The situation is made clear by the Queen's letter to her uncle on February 2. The speech for

the opening of Parliament had not been easy, "as the feeling *against* the *Emperor here* is *very strong*. I think *yet* that if *Austria* is *strong* and *well prepared*, and *Germany strong* and *well inclined* toward *us* (as *Prussia certainly is*), France will *not* be so eager to attempt what I *firmly* believe would *end* in the *Emperor's* downfall." (*ib.* iii. 401.) She sent by Lord Cowley an autograph letter to the Emperor of Austria, offering her good offices in the interests of peace. (*Martin*, iv. 392.) And the Prince on March 1 sent a member of the Prussian Royal Family a letter warning against precipitate assistance to Austria in Italy, and indicating a line of political restraint which was actually adopted by the Prussian Chamber. (*ib.* iv. 397–8.)

The Italian question, which then developed so rapidly, was destined to put a severe strain on our Constitutional machinery. The Conservative Cabinet and the Court were all for peace and neutrality in the imminent quarrel. "I care for neither Austria nor France," wrote Lord Malmesbury, "but Lord Derby and I are determined to use every effort to prevent war, which would cost 100,000 lives and desolate the fairest parts of Europe." (ii. 148, January 12, 1859.) He told Lord Cowley, our ambassador at Paris, that "the great duty of every honest man must be to prevent the scourge which two or three unprincipled men would inflict on mankind for their personal profit." But the French Emperor, wishing for something more than neutrality, was very desirous of getting Lord Palmerston back into power, as more anti-Austrian in his sympathy than the party led by Lord Derby, whose Government might fall at any moment, and did in fact fall before the summer was over. He therefore did all he could to upset the Tory ministry, making special use of the *Morning Post*. On November 2, 1852, Walewski had admitted to Lord Malmesbury "that the French Government paid the *Morning Post*, and that he saw Borthwick, the editor, every day" (i. 362); and on January 26, 1859, the incredible fact is vouched for by Lord Malmesbury that the same paper received orders from the French emperor to attack him on every possible occasion: "Mr. Borthwick, the editor, saw him at Paris, and got his orders from himself." (ii. 151.) So an article of January 17 violently accused the

Foreign Secretary of forming a German league against France, and every day that paper became more violent against the peaceful policy pursued by him.

But precipitate action by Austria put an end to all hopes of peace. When on April 19, 1859, she threatened hostilities unless Sardinia disarmed, and on Sardinia's refusal sent her troops across the Ticino, Lord Derby told the Queen that all we could do was to protest strongly against Austria's action. The Queen agreed with this policy, but her letter to her uncle on April 26 shows her real feelings: "I have *no hope* of peace *left*. Though it is *originally* the wicked folly of Russia and France that has brought about this fearful crisis, it is the madness and blindness of Austria which have brought on a war *now*. It has put them in the wrong, and entirely changed the feeling here, which was all that one could desire, into the most *vehement* sympathy for Sardinia, though we hope now again to be able to *throw* the blame of the war on France, who *now* won't hear of mediation." (*Letters*, iii. 419.)

Public opinion had indeed changed. It had been strongly Austrian at first, as Lord Granville described it to Lord Canning in a letter dated February 9, 1859: "I remarked that in the Lords, whenever I said anything in favour of the Emperor or the Italians, the House became nearly sea-sick, while they cheered anything the other way as if pearls were dropping from my lips." (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 324.)

Evidently the Court regretfully abandoned its Austrian sympathies, and at bottom regarded France as the enemy. On April 29 the Queen wrote to Lord Derby that it "would not be morally defensible to restrain Austria from defending herself while she can," and suggested a protest against the conduct of Sardinia. And the growing divergence of view is well shown by the Prince's letter of the same date, where he says of himself and the Queen: "We work day and night, doing everything we can to avert war. . . . We are greatly pleased with our Ministers in these trying circumstances. . . . Palmerston, on the other hand, is out and out Napoléonide, maintains France to be right on all points. . . . Clarendon is of precisely the opposite opinion." (*Martin*, iv. 434.)

"Palmerston continues to be wholly French," he wrote to Stockmar on May 12, "thinks everything right which the Emperor does, and that we are all wrong in not going hand in hand with him. The country's feeling is entirely the other way, and its instincts sound; it asks leave to form a Volunteer corps, and to be permitted to arm itself. This was granted yesterday." (*ib.* iv. 443.)

The defeat of Lord Derby's Government early in 1859 greatly distressed the Court. "I am thoroughly disgusted," wrote the Prince to Stockmar on March 23, "and yet I have just completed for the Princess Royal a treatise on Constitutional Government. It is dealt with here just at this moment with an utter absence of moral principle." (*ib.* iv. 410.) After a seven nights' debate, beginning on March 21, Lord John Russell's amendment to the Derby Reform Bill was carried by 330 to 291, and on April 4 Lord Derby resigned. The Queen wrote of herself on the 19th as "dreadfully disgusted with politics and Europe." (*ib.* iv. 427.) The dissolution that followed, though it increased the Conservative majority, yet left it at the mercy of that combination between the forces of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell which their recent reconciliation made possible. The Queen's political neutrality was affected by her foreign sympathies, for she wrote on May 3 to her uncle: "Here the Elections are not as satisfactory as could be wished, but the Government still think they will have a clear gain of 25 to 30 seats, which will make a difference of 50 or 60 on a Division. It gives, unfortunately, no majority; still it must be remembered that the Opposition are very much divided. . . . Lord John has been holding moderate and prudent language on Foreign Affairs, whereas Lord Palmerston has made bad and mischievous speeches, but *not* at all in accordance with the feelings of the country. The country wishes for strict neutrality, but strong defences," and she ended by saying how she and the Prince were by all these cares "well fagged and worked and worried." (*Letters*, iii. 424.)

So when the expected happened on June 10, 1859, and she heard from Mr. Disraeli that the second Derby Government had been beaten by 13 on a hostile amendment to the Address, she described herself in reply as "though fully

prepared" for the event, yet "very much grieved" by it. (*Letters*, iii. 436.)

Meantime, whilst our domestic politics were in this turmoil, the war was in full swing, and Germany was bursting with desire to join in the fray on the side of Austria. On April 30 the Hanoverian Minister in London said openly that Germany ought to declare war on France at once, and told Malmesbury that the Germans were very anxious to do so. (*Memoirs*, ii. 176.) The Duke of Saxe-Coburg, whom Malmesbury met at Windsor, was "red hot," and very eager to command the Prussian Army. He said that Prussia could not resist the pressure of public opinion, and his aide-de-camp expressed the hope that the Austrians would be beaten, as then all Germany would rise as one man and invade France. It must be remembered that this "red-hot" Duke was the Prince Consort's brother. Count Vitzthum, the Saxon Minister, told Lord Malmesbury that, if Austria were defeated, nothing would prevent Germany from rising, and a victory of the Allies would set 400,000 men on the march to Paris. (*ib.* ii. 182.) Persigny, again French ambassador in London, was "very anxious at the menacing attitude of Germany and Prussia, and with reason," and Malmesbury noted how on May 18 the Queen received him on his presentation "civilly, but coldly, and made no speech." (*ib.* ii. 182.)

Lord Malmesbury, who had told the Duke of Saxe-Coburg that, if Germany did rise as one man and invade France, not one atom of help would they get from us, sent a circular dispatch the same day (May 2) to all our representatives at German Courts, to warn the German Governments that, should they provoke a war with France, they could expect no help from us. Should the French attack their coasts, our Navy would not assist them. For both Lord Malmesbury and Walewski had been informed that the whole of the Prussian Army was to be mobilised in consequence of the strong feeling in Germany against France. (*ib.* ii. 205–6.) The curious thing is that, though this dispatch was sent to Paris, the Emperor never saw it. It was not till April 1861 that Lord Malmesbury convinced him that so far had the Derby Government been from planning a

German Coalition against him, as he suspected, that it was actually that Government which had prevented Prussia and the rest of Germany from joining Austria. (*ib.* ii. 176, 203.) Had he not disliked Lord Derby's Government from this false belief in its irreconcilable hostility to the liberation of Italy and to the French Government, much of the difficulty of the passing years would have been avoided.

But in spite of Malmesbury's efforts the German war fever continued. Thus the *Times* of June 1, commenting on a German article, described all Germany as "possessed by a unanimous uproarious enthusiasm for the conquest of Alsace and Lorraine, and for the occupation of Paris." (*Martin*, iv. 445.) The war of 1870 all but broke out in 1859. And there came a perilous point when the sympathy of the English Court with Austria, coincident with that of Germany, nearly reached the war point; for Lord Malmesbury thus wrote in his Diary for May 29: "The Queen and Prince feel very strongly the defeat of the Austrians, and are anxious to take their part, but I told Her Majesty that was quite impossible; this country would not go to war even in support of Italian independence, and there would not be ten men in the House of Commons who would do so on behalf of Austria." (*ib.* ii. 184.) Yet not a hint of this wish of the Queen and Prince to go to war with France is given in Sir Theodore Martin's *Life of the Prince*, and the fact very much qualifies their efforts after the close of the war in July to prevent our being involved in such a Continental warfare as the rival ambitions of Continental Powers then made more likely than ever. That the Queen repented of her successful efforts before the war to restrain Prussia from taking part in it is shown by her letter to Lord John Russell of July 18, 1859, in which she said that she felt strongly the responsibility of having from the first urged Prussia to take no part in the war, and having been very influential in preventing her. (*Letters*, iii. 459.) It would seem therefore that, could the Court have had its way, we should have hazarded a war against France on behalf of Austria.

It was perhaps this antagonism of views which explains the following incident. Lord Malmesbury received a telegram from Prince Gortschakoff agreeing with his wish to

localise the war; and Lord Malmesbury in his reply said: "We are anxious to unite with Russia, not only in localising the war, but in arresting it." Whereupon the Queen wrote to him on May 20, 1859: "The Queen was much surprised to receive the enclosed telegram. An alliance with Russia to *localise* and *arrest* the war by joint interference, which is here proposed to Russia, is a policy to which the Queen has not given her sanction, and which would require very mature deliberation before it could ever be entertained. . . . How can we propose to join Russia, whom we know to be pledged to France? The Queen hopes Lord Malmesbury will stop the communication of this message to Prince Gortschakoff." (*Letters*, iii. 426.)

And the same strong anti-French feeling continued to influence the Court throughout the ensuing difficult years. The Queen's letters show clearly how more and more the Crown's right to a dominant opinion on foreign policy tended to a claim to actual control of it. As illustrative of this tendency may be quoted an interesting passage of arms between the Queen and Lord Derby in reference to the Speech from the Throne about to be delivered on June 7, 1859, after the General Election; the Queen writing as follows: "The Queen takes objection to the wording of the two paragraphs about the war and our armaments. As it stands, it conveys the impression of a determination on the Queen's part of maintaining a neutrality—*à tout prix*—whatever circumstances may arise, which would do harm abroad, and be inconvenient at home. What the Queen may express is her wish to remain neutral, and her hope that circumstances may allow her to do so. The paragraph about our Navy makes our position still more humble, as it contains a public apology for arming, and yet betrays fear of our being attacked by France." (*ib.* iii. 429.) To which Lord Derby made an equally spirited reply, assuring her of the unanimity of the country to observe a righteous neutrality in the impending war, and resolute against any words that would saddle the Government with the charge of pro-Austrian proclivities. Also he refused to recognise it as humiliating for a great country, in announcing a large increase of its naval force, to disclaim any object of aggression. He ex-

pressed his deep conviction of the danger that might attend the Queen's suggested amendments, and declared the Cabinet to be unanimous against them. The difficulty was surmounted by each side yielding something; but no nation can have an effective voice over its foreign policy where the Minister responsible to Parliament is controlled by an authority that is outside and above it.

Nevertheless, though the Derby Cabinet was no more pro-Austrian than the Liberal Party, its fall on June 10, 1859, was a great blow to the Court; and after a vain attempt to induce Lord Palmerston and Lord John to serve under Lord Granville, the Queen was compelled to recall Lord Palmerston to power, which he was destined to retain for the next seven years. It was hoped by the Court that at all events Lord John Russell would not be Foreign Secretary; as before in 1851, both the Queen and the Prince desired the post for Lord Clarendon, who took a different view from Palmerston on the Italian question (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 309); but on June 12 Lord Palmerston wrote to the Queen that he was "sorry to say" that Lord John would take no other. (*Letters*, iii. 442.) So the difficulty returned of a Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary at issue with the Crown, the Ministers sympathising with the movement that ended in the unification of Italy, and the Court mistrusting Napoleon, and pulling in an opposite direction. The old troubled relationship began anew that had prevailed from 1846 to 1851, when Lord John Russell had been Prime Minister and Palmerston Foreign Minister; the only difference being that from 1859 to 1865 the positions were reversed, Lord John being Foreign Secretary and Palmerston Prime Minister. But the painful difference between them and the Court continued just the same.

It showed itself at once. After the armistice between Austria and France had been signed on July 8, Napoleon sought for the "moral support" of England for effecting a peace, and Persigny went to Lord Palmerston to say that the time for mediation had come, and suggesting terms of peace, to which Lord Palmerston agreed. The latter at once rode off to Richmond to tell Lord John, who was "equally delighted." Whereupon Lord John wrote to the Queen advising

her to give such "moral support," as not affecting our neutrality even if Austria declined the terms. He added that such support would probably end the war, and that her Ministers could not make themselves responsible for its continuance by advising her to refuse it. Nevertheless the Queen somewhat indignantly refused her consent. She conceived that Lord John Russell and Lord Palmerston "ought not to ask her to give her 'moral support' to one of the belligerents." To help Napoleon to get the Austrians out of Venetia by diplomacy she regarded as inconsistent with our neutrality. Meantime Persigny had telegraphed to Paris the consent of the British Government, and the Emperor of Austria, unaware of the Queen's refusal, and thinking himself thrown over by England and Prussia, accepted Napoleon's terms. (*Letters*, iii. 450; *Malmesbury*, ii. 200.) Had the Emperor known of the Queen's refusal, how different history might have been. Germany and ourselves might have both been involved in war with France for the sake of Austria, and the whole history of Europe have taken another direction.

But the Queen's refusal made no difference, and the French and Austrian Emperors concluded the peace of Villafranca between themselves on July 11, 1859, much to the surprise of Europe. As all the military success, culminating in the battle of Solferino on June 24, had been on the side of France, Napoleon might have exacted harsher terms. But he had gained Lombardy for Sardinia, though Venetia still remained under Austrian rule, and the Dukes of Modena and Tuscany were to be reinstated. Contemporaries were agreed that a sincere aversion from further bloodshed disposed Napoleon to peace, but the movement in Germany for a march on Paris and for the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine doubtless also had their weight with him.

The Queen's letters of this time breathe the vexation which she and the Prince felt. For their mistrust of Napoleon was profound. On July 13 the Queen thus expressed her feelings to Lord John when she heard of the unexpected peace: Napoleon, she said, "will now probably omit no occasion to cajole Austria as he has done to Russia, and turn her spirit of revenge upon Prussia and Germany—the

Emperor's probable next victims. Should he have rendered himself the master of the entire Continent, the time may come for us either to obey or fight him with terrible odds against us. This has been the Queen's view from the beginning of this complication." (*Letters*, iii. 452.) She wrote letters to Lord Palmerston and to Lord John, both dated July 18. To the former she wrote: "The Queen is less disappointed with the peace than Lord Palmerston appears to be, as she never could share his sanguine hopes that the 'Coup d'état' and 'the Empire' could be made subservient to the establishment of independent nationalities and the diffusion of liberty and Constitutional Government on the Continent. . . . The Emperor is entirely uncontrolled in his actions. . . . Our attempts to use him for our views must prove a failure, as the Russian peace has shown." (*Martin*, iv. 463.) To Lord John Russell she contended that France's conduct to Italy showed how little Napoleon cared for Italian independence when for purposes of his own he brought on the war. We had been very responsible for urging Prussia against going to war, and she would "very naturally look to us not to desert her when the evil hour for her came." (*Letters*, iii. 458–9.)

During the ensuing months Lord John's policy was all for "Italy and the Italians." He objected to the restitution to their respective Dukes of the Tuscans and the Modenese "as if they were so many firkins of butter," and urged that the decision should rest with a Tuscan representative assembly. He wished to see Italy freed alike from French as from Austrian troops. And as Austria naturally resented this attitude, some brisk correspondence ensued between the Queen and her Foreign Minister. On August 21 she returned him a draft: "She is very sorry that she cannot give her approval to it. There are many points in it to which she cannot but feel the gravest objections." She protested, as reversing our policy of non-intervention, against our promoting a scheme for a redistribution of the North Italian territories and Governments. (*ib.* iii. 461.)

Lord John replied two days later that friendly advice was not intervention, and that if by such friendly advice we could prevent a bloody and causeless war in Italy we were bound

to give it. Otherwise we might have to intervene ultimately either against "the ruthless tyranny of Austria or the unbridled ambition of France."

On August 24 the Queen thus addressed Lord John: "The Queen is really placed in a position of much difficulty, giving her deep pain. She has been obliged to object to so many drafts sent to her from the Foreign Office on the Italian Question, and yet no sooner is one withdrawn or altered than others are submitted of exactly the same purport or tendency, even if couched in new words. The Queen has so often expressed her views that she is almost reluctant to reiterate them." She begged him to re-peruse the two drafts, which, if they had any meaning or object, urged France to break in the treaty of Zurich the chief terms she had agreed to in that of Villafranca. The formation of an Italian Confederation and the return of the Dukes to their Duchies must be considered as compensations to Austria for her loss of Lombardy. The result might be a fresh war of Austria against France, or a war of France and England against Austria: a misfortune from which she felt herself bound to protect her country. She wished her correspondence to be circulated amongst all the members of the Cabinet, to ascertain whether they also would be parties to the reversal of non-intervention, and to prevent these frequent discussions which were so very painful to her. (*Letters*, iii. 464.)

The Prince, too, wrote to Lord Granville on August 25, 1859: "You will be sorry to hear that we have had disputes about drafts daily for the last two weeks. On the Queen's refusing to sanction they were withdrawn, but others *worse* in tendency submitted." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 354.)

Lord Palmerston was naturally "much perturbed and annoyed" by this state of things, whilst Lord John was "in a state of great irritation, said we might as well live under a despotism, and threatened resignation." (*ib.* i. 357.) A Cabinet was called, at which Palmerston spoke for Lord John, "and bitterly as regarded the Court," but which took the side of the Queen, to the smoothing over of matters for the time. But when the Queen was at Balmoral, and Lord John close by at Abergeldie, the Prince told Lord Clarendon that the Royal stay in the North had been em-

bittered by the "most painful warfare" with Lord John and Lord Palmerston. (*ib.* i. 360.) The following letter shows it: "Lord John Russell will not be surprised if the dispatches of Lord Cowley and drafts by Lord John in answer to them have given her much pain." She complained that the very advice which she had objected to when officially brought before her for her sanction, which had been objected to by the Cabinet, and which Lord John had agreed to withdraw, had been given by "direct communication of the Prime Minister through the French ambassador with the Emperor." "What is the use of the Queen's open and, she fears, sometimes wearisome correspondence with her Ministers, what the use of long deliberations of the Cabinet, if the very policy can be carried out by indirect means which is set aside officially, and what protection has the Queen against this practice?" (*Letters*, iii. 469.)

The Queen had a quite legitimate fear that we might be dragged into a war. She disapproved of a plan for an alliance of England and France for the purpose of overruling Austria, if the Duchies to which she was the heir were given to Sardinia, and Austria should object. "The Queen thinks it incumbent upon her not to leave Lord John Russell in ignorance of the fact that she could not approve such a policy reversing our whole position since the commencement of the war." (September 6, 1859, *ib.* iii. 470.) On the same day she protested to Lord Palmerston against an attempt to convince Napoleon that it would be for his interest to break his word to the Emperor of Austria as reflecting on the honour of her own Government. "She must insist upon this being distinctly guarded against."

In his reply of September 7 the Foreign Secretary felt that "he must offer to Your Majesty such advice as he thinks best adapted to secure the interests and dignity of Your Majesty and the country. He will be held by Parliament responsible for that advice. It will be always in Your Majesty's power to reject it altogether." (*ib.* iii. 472.) He denied the charge made by the Queen that he had ever concealed his opinions from his colleagues in the Cabinet. Lord Palmerston in a letter of September 9 disclaimed the charge of an attempt to persuade Napoleon to break his word to the

Emperor of Austria. And if Her Majesty meant to debar him from all communications with Foreign Ministers except the formal decisions of the Government, such a curtailment of the constitutional functions of his office would make his further service impossible. (*Letters*, iii. 474.)

In all this unfortunate wrangle the point of interest is not so much the antagonism of the views supported on either side as the claim of the Crown to supervise or even override the decisions of Ministers responsible to Parliament. After the Treaty of Zurich of November 10, 1859, embodying the terms of Villafranca, had been signed, the Queen on December 1 begged Lord John Russell to make it quite clear to the Emperor that he had no chance of getting us to join him in any renewed war with Austria; but Lord John was of another mind. On the same day he told the Queen in reply that "Lord John Russell is certainly not prepared to say that a case may not arise when the interests of Great Britain might not require that she should give material support to the Emperor of the French," as such an alliance might prevent Austria from disturbing the peace of Europe. To which the Queen, replying next day, said that she was extremely sorry that Lord John contemplated the possibility of our joining France in such a war. She would not conceal from him "that under no pretence would she depart from her position of neutrality in the Italian quarrel, and inflict upon her country and Europe the calamity of war." (*ib.* iii. 478.) In the Congress that was to follow, but which did not, she put her veto on Sir James Hudson, who as our Minister at Turin had shown his strong sympathy with Cavour's policy, from being our second representative, as suggested by the Prime Minister. She reminded Lord John that in a second war with France Austria might be supported by Germany, and that in that case Napoleon would not have played his game badly, if he could get the alliance of England to sanction and foster his attack on the Rhine, which would inevitably follow. That, she believed, was France's cherished object, and its success was certain if we became her dupes. In any case she held that it was to war in support of Napoleon to which we were being driven, and she was determined to hold to her neutrality in the Italian

intrigue, wars, and revolutions. (*ib.* iii. 480.) As the Prince put it in a letter to Lord Granville of December 5, 1859, the war that seemed in prospect "must lead to our being the allies of France in her attack on the Rhine, should Germany not abandon Austria a second time, and this is giving the Emperor the whole game into his hands, and placing us, when he shall have become master of Europe, at his mercy." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 368.) But the Court forgot, in its strong mistrust of France, that in the May of that same year Germany had mobilised the greater part of her vast army, and that a powerful party in that army had been then clamorous to be led to Paris, in the hope of crippling France for the rest of the century. (*Martin*, iv. 445.)

The year 1860 began with a continuance of different views on foreign policy between the Court and Lord Palmerston and his Foreign Secretary, Lord John Russell. Palmerston, who on November 4, 1859, had expressed to Lord John Russell the great distrust he had lately come to entertain of Napoleon (Ashley's *Life*, ii. 187), in his memorandum of January 5, 1860 on foreign policy, deprecated imputations on his good faith, and counselled, even at the risk of war with Austria, an English alliance with France and Sardinia. (*ib.* ii. 172–80.) An offensive and defensive alliance with France, and a joint guarantee of the independence of Central Italy, as the price of the Commercial Treaty with France, came before the Cabinet early in January, and though defended by Palmerston, Lord John Russell, and Gladstone, was rejected by a majority, owing, it was rumoured, to the influence of the Court. (*Malmesbury*, ii. 213.) Fortunately the course of events prevented a difference on this salient point from coming to an open rupture.

Nevertheless fundamentally different opinions about Italy continued to cause difficulties of considerable magnitude. As the Queen had said in a letter of July 24, 1859, "she would be most happy if anything can be done to improve the condition of Italy" (*Martin*, iv. 478); like the Cabinet, she "would have rejoiced to see a free and strong Italy" (*ib* iv. 482); but Austria held the first place in her affections. On January 11, 1860, the Queen wrote to her Foreign Secretary that she would have Sardinia as well as Austria and France

invited not to interfere with Italy; for Austria had reversionary rights in Tuscany and Modena, whilst Sardinia had none at all. Austria could not allow Sardinia to "possess herself of her inheritance under her very eyes." To which Lord John replied on the same day, reminding her that the doctrines of the Revolution of 1688 could "hardly be abandoned in these days by Your Majesty's present advisers. According to those doctrines all power held by Sovereigns may be forfeited by misconduct, and each nation is the judge of its own internal government." He could not abjure those opinions or act against them. (*Letters*, iii. 489.)

The Queen once said of Lord John that he would have been better company if he had had a third topic of conversation beside the Constitution of 1688—and himself (*Quarterly Review*, April 1901, 333); and on this occasion she replied very fairly that she could not make out what those doctrines of 1688 had to do with Sardinia's non-interference in Italy, or how this could oblige Lord John to abjure those doctrines. To her uncle in Belgium she wrote: "Affairs are in a sad and complicated state, and though we modify matters as much as we *can*, we can't entirely keep our Ministers (the *two*) from doing *something*." (*Letters*, iii. 490.)

The annexation of Nice and Savoy from Sardinia by Napoleon early in 1860 was a fair cause of triumph to the Court over "the two." The Court shared in the general indignation provoked by the transaction. At the meeting between Napoleon and Cavour, the Sardinian Minister, at Plombières in 1858, though the cession of Savoy to France had been the price agreed upon for French aid to free Italy from the Alps to the Adriatic, Cavour "pretended to be furious when the event happened." (*Malmesbury*, ii. 199, July 13, 1859; ii. 226, April 19, 1860.) So the Queen could write to Lord John Russell on February 9, 1860: "We have been made regular dupes (which the Queen apprehended and warned against all along). The return to an English alliance, universal peace, respect for treaties, commercial prosperity, etc. etc., were blinds to cover before Europe a policy of spoliation." France's claim to compensation for adding to the territory of Sardinia by the annexation of Savoy was "wanting in all excuses. . . . Sardinia

is being aggrandised solely at the expense of Austria and the House of Lorraine, and France is to be compensated." (*Martin*, v. 27.)

Fresh proposals from Napoleon led the Queen to repeat her opinion that they had not the good of Italy at heart, but only the Emperor's own aggrandisement, to the detriment of Europe. Lord John wrote, on February 9, 1860: "Lord John Russell unfortunately does not partake Your Majesty's opinions in regard to Italy, and he is unwilling to obtrude on Your Majesty unnecessary statement of his views. . . . Whatever may be the consequence, the liberation of the Italian people from a foreign yoke is, in the eyes of Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, an increase of freedom and happiness at which as well-wishers of mankind they cannot but rejoice." (*Letters*, iii. 494.) The Queen took great umbrage at this letter, which she forwarded to Lord Palmerston with complaints of its tone: "It was not the kind of communication which the Foreign Secretary ought to make, when asked by his Sovereign to explain the views of the Cabinet upon a question so important and momentous as the annexation of Savoy to France." She had given no opinion on Italian liberation from a foreign yoke, nor need she protest against the covert insinuation that she was no well-wisher of mankind and indifferent to its freedom and happiness. But she must refer to the constitutional position of Ministers towards herself. They were responsible for their advice to her, but they were bound fully, respectfully, and openly to place before her the grounds of their advice so as to enable her to judge whether she could assent to it or not. "The Queen must demand that respect which is due from a Minister to his Sovereign. As the Queen must consider the enclosed letter as deficient in it, she thinks Lord John Russell might probably wish to reconsider it." (*ib.* iii. 495.) And that evening Lord John apologised. Wherein he doubtless acted rightly. But what is of chief interest is the Queen's claim to assent or not to Ministerial advice in foreign policy. Her relations with Lord John Russell were almost as much strained during this period as they had been with Palmerston from 1846 to 1851, and the fact shows a real flaw in the working of our system. How strained those relations were, perhaps

the yet unpublished letters of the Queen and Lord John will some day more fully reveal.

Despite the Commercial Treaty ratified on February 4, 1860, between England and France, the Savoy question nearly wrecked the alliance. Lord Cowley, our ambassador at Paris, had a heated talk with Napoleon, of which he sent a long report to Lord John Russell, who forwarded it to the Queen. Her comment in reply was: "The circumstance is useful, as proving that the Emperor, if met with firmness, is more likely to retract than if cajoled, and that the statesmen of Europe have much to answer for, having spoiled him for the last ten years by submission and cajolery. . . . If Europe were to stand together, and make a united declaration against the annexation of Savoy, the evil might still be arrested, but less than that will not suffice." (*Martin*, v. 42.) This allusion to the last ten years proves that the Court's mistrust of Napoleon covered the whole period of the Crimean War, when he was our beloved ally. The Prince writing to Stockmar on March 17 claimed that the Queen and himself had all along seen the danger which lay in the English policy, and foreseeing what would happen had pointed it out to the Ministry in vain. (*ib.* v. 50.)

The Savoy incident was chief among the causes which tended to convert both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister to the Court's suspicions of Napoleon. At all events, Lord Palmerston fell in with the popular demand for increased armaments, fortifications, and volunteering; and when Gladstone threatened to leave the Cabinet in consequence, Palmerston wrote to the Queen that it was better to lose Mr. Gladstone than to lose Portsmouth. Lord John's speech of March 26, two days after the treaty of the cession of Savoy had been signed, in which he even hinted at co-operation with other Powers against France in certain contingencies, still further helped to reconcile the Court to the erring "two." The Queen was so delighted that she wrote next day to compliment Lord John on his speech, and made no concealment of her dislike of the French alliance. "It is a belief in this alliance," she wrote, "which makes the rest of Europe powerless and helpless. . . . As the English Press and general public were favourable to the Italian

Revolution, and the loss of the Italian provinces by Austria, and are supposed to be so with regard to the separation of Hungary from Austria, and of Poland from Prussia, the Emperor Napoleon has the more chance of keeping up the distrust of the Continental Powers in England. . . . Once reassured as to the views of England, they would, the Queen feels certain, readily rally round her, and follow her lead." (*ib.* v. 71.) A European Coalition against France was within the bounds of possibility, could the Court have prevailed over "the two."

The Prince, writing to Stockmar on April 15, 1861, said about foreign politics that it was impossible to discover any principle in them; "but one thing is very plain, that all through the anti-German side is taken with passionate warmth. What pain this causes me you may imagine. I can do nothing, and yet I know full well the issue must be to the advantage of France and the ultimate detriment of England." (*ib.* v. 340.) But Ministers came tardily to these suspicions of the Court, Lord John being governed by the feeling expressed by him in 1855 that "the Emperor of the French had been to us the most faithful ally that had ever wielded the sceptre or ruled the destinies of France." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 263.) And probably this was fortunate for the peace of the world.

When the French Emperor suggested a Congress to settle the questions at issue in consequence of the war, the Queen replied to a letter from Lord John Russell in April 1860 that "she must say that she would consider it the *deepest* degradation to this country if she was compelled to appear at the Emperor's Congress summoned to Paris, in order to register and put her seal to the acts of spoliation of the Emperor." Yet probably a Congress would have been the best solution. On April 30 she complained of the suspected designs of Sardinia as morally bad as well as politically inexpedient. She begged Lord John to insert a passage in his draft to place it on record that "we do attach importance to public justice and morality." The Foreign Minister replied the same day that he was sorry that he could not agree that there would be any moral wrong in helping to overthrow the Government of the King of the Two Sicilies; the best international

lawyers thought it a merit to overthrow a tyrannical government, and few governments had been so tyrannical as that of Naples ; he could not see anything wrong in giving aid to an insurrection in the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily (*Letters*, iii. 505, 506). So possible is it for Sovereigns and Ministers to see things from different aspects.

" Really it is too bad," wrote the Queen to her uncle on May 8, 1860. " *No* country, no human being would ever dream of *disturbing* or *attacking* France ; every one would be glad to see her prosperous ; but *she* must needs disturb every quarter of the Globe and try to make mischief and set every one by the ears ; and of course it will end some day in a *regular crusade* against the universal disturber of *the world*. It is really monstrous." (*ib.* iii. 508 ; *Martin*, v. 98.) It is true that a march on the Rhine was openly talked of at Paris, and Belgium was alarmed by threats of annexation ; but Germany too was by no means as unaggressive as it pleased the English Court to believe.

The *Times* of June 25, 1860, took heart from the great volunteer review as a proof that England was " at heart a military nation." The Courts of England, Prussia, and Austria agreed that no one of them should take action without previous communication with the others. So that the Prince could write to Stockmar on June 30 that " even our Cabinet is beginning to see things rightly." (*ib.* v. 134.) And on August 21, after the great volunteer review at Edinburgh, he could write to the same that " the French are as much out of humour at this demonstration as Messrs. Cobden and Bright." (*ib.* v. 173.)

That summer of 1860 was indeed an anxious time. Everything seemed ripening to war in the customary way : the French and English Press flinging fierce retorts at one another. In June Napoleon had a friendly interview at Baden with his future enemy and Conqueror, William I. of Germany, in which he complained of the power of the Press, and warned the Prussian King against permitting it to rule Prussia as it ruled England ; where it had helped to create that childish fear of a quite impossible French invasion. (*ib.* v. 125.) In any case, the panic produced a frenzy of volunteering, and it was in vain that the Emperor con-

vinced Lord Clarendon of the sincerity of his wish to maintain the English alliance (*ib.* v. 174–6), and tried to strengthen it by abolishing on December 16, 1860, the passport system against English travellers. (*ib.* v. 250.)

In November 1860 Lord John sent the Queen a draft dispatch to be sent to all the Powers, expressing approval of the Italian revolution, and adding that, if any Power attempted forcible interference, this country should be free to act as it chose.

The Queen replied that this was either an empty threat or one meant to be followed by war, and she " for one was not prepared to decide to go to war to secure the success of the Italian revolution." (*Letters*, iii. 523.) It is to the credit of both correspondents that no breach of amicable relations resulted from these divergent views, but all their letters show the difficulty of harmonising the frequently irreconcilable opinions of the Crown and the Foreign Minister under a system which makes the latter partly responsible to Parliament and partly to the Crown. And this division of responsibility is manifestly not conducive to a decided or consistent foreign policy.

No change for the better marked the Queen's feeling towards Napoleon as time went on. On August 18, 1861, in a letter to Lord Palmerston she wrote pessimistically of the time " when the Emperor should have the whole Continent at his feet, and the command of the Mediterranean and the Baltic," as not a very pleasant one for his ally. (*ib.* iii. 575.) And Lord Clarendon pressed on her the possibility of the Emperor's thinking it necessary at any moment for his purposes in France to seize upon the left bank of the Rhine. (*ib.* iii. 585.)

It seems almost a miracle that the events that ended in the unification of Italy did not result in a European war. It has been shown that in May 1859 the Queen and Prince actually wished to go to war with France in defence of Austria, and on March 20, 1860, the Queen expressed to Lord John Russell her fear that it would " not be long before the union of Europe for her safety against a common enemy might become a painful necessity." (*Martin*, v. 59.) The Prince Regent of Prussia's idea, as expressed in a letter to

the Prince Consort on March 4, 1860, that the four Powers of England, Prussia, Austria, and Russia, without forming an actual coalition, or even alliance, might oppose a "moral consensus of opinion" to the French desire of annexation (*ib.* v. 47) was in the direction of joint military action and of a return to the situation of 1814. To the tact and firmness with which Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell steered the ship of State safely through these dangerous eddies the maintenance of the peace of Europe was mainly due, assisted as they were by the Court's strong preference for a policy of neutrality; but much was also due to the good sense and moderation of the French Emperor.

One cannot perhaps better take leave of this period of Lord John Russell's control of the Foreign Office than by recalling the words in which, in a letter to the Queen dated December 29, 1851, he laid down his conception of the lines on which the foreign policy of this country should always be conducted: "The grand rule of doing to others as we wish that they should do unto us is more applicable than any system of political science. The honour of England does not consist in defending every English officer or English subject, right or wrong, but in taking care that she does not infringe the rules of justice, and that they are not infringed against her." (*Letters*, ii. 428.)

But equally wise and memorable were the words of the Queen in a letter to Lord Clarendon of March 30, 1853, when she exhorted him in all cases of diplomatic difficulty to "arrest the mischief, sure to arise from a continuance of mutual suspicion between this Country and any Power, by at once entering upon full and unreserved explanations, on the first symptoms of distrust." (*ib.* ii. 540.) Many wars and fears of wars might have been saved by the observance of so golden a counsel. But how can a society based on the principle of antagonistic nationalities generate anything but mutual suspicion?

CHAPTER VII

The Queen and the Dano-German War

Never were the waters of international strife more disturbed than during the first half of the Queen's reign, nor least among the causes of disturbance was the immemorial dispute between Germany and Denmark about the Duchies of Holstein and Schleswig. It brought us nearer to war than any other problem of the time, and as our escape from such a calamity was largely due to the action of the Queen, and as the episode well illustrates the part that is or may be played by the Crown in foreign politics, so much of the history of the quarrel as concerned the Queen constitutes a necessary chapter in dealing with the constitutional aspects of her reign.

From the first her sympathies were strongly on the side of Germany against the Danes, and from 1848 onwards the question embittered relations between herself and Palmerston. When war broke out in 1849 between Germany and Denmark, she attributed it to an unlawful attempt on Denmark's part to incorporate Schleswig, and held that it was Germany's right and duty not to make peace till she had secured the integrity of that Duchy. (*Letters*, ii. 265.)

In 1850, when the Powers were to be invited to sign a protocol to settle the Danish question, she remonstrated strongly with Palmerston against excluding the Germanic Confederation from the invitation. She argued that, as Holstein belonged to that Confederation and was only accidentally connected with Denmark through its Sovereign, a protocol to ensure the integrity of the Danish Monarchy without Germany's knowledge and consent amounted to a direct attack on Germany; it was "an act repugnant to all feelings of justice and morality for third parties to dispose of other people's properties"; nor was it surprising that

Austria and Prussia should complain of Lord Palmerston's agreeing about the said protocol with Sweden, Russia, Denmark, and France without giving any notice to the German powers. (*Letters*, ii. 296, June 22, 1850.)

Lord Palmerston, in a letter of June 23, 1850, to the Prime Minister, traversed all these complaints of the Queen. As the protocol was only a record of the wishes of the Powers and decided nothing, it could not be an attack upon Germany. The Queen was requiring him to be Minister for the Germanic Confederation, and " why should we take up the cudgels for Germany ? " The Queen, however, stuck to it that the protocol did imply that Holstein was to remain part of Denmark, and that this did involve an attack on Germany, inasmuch as the Diet in 1846 had declared Denmark's attempt to incorporate Schleswig to be a virtual declaration of war owing to the close connection between Holstein and Schleswig. She told Palmerston that she did not wish him to be Minister for Germany, but only to treat Germany with due consideration. (*ib.* ii. 298.)

The difference was acute, and it occurred just when relations were almost at their worst between the Queen and her Foreign Minister ; for it was on June 25, 1850, that Palmerston made that speech of four and three-quarter hours in defence of his Foreign policy, which Lord John Russell in a letter to the Queen described as " one of the most masterly he ever delivered." (*ib.* ii. 299.)

A few days later, on July 2, 1850, peace was signed between Denmark and Prussia, though war continued between Denmark and the Duchies. The King of Denmark thanked the Queen for her mediatory intervention. But the Queen continued uneasy. On July 28 she told Lord John Russell that she was personally convinced that Lord Palmerston was secretly planning an armed Russian intervention in Schleswig ; and that she owed it to herself and the country no longer to retain at the Foreign Office a man in whom she could have no confidence, and who had conducted himself in *anything but* a straightforward and proper manner to herself, so exposing her to insults from other nations, and the country to the risk of serious complications. And there was no chance

of his reforming himself in his sixty-seventh year. (*ib.* ii. 306.)

That Parliament had supported Palmerston by 310 to 264 only a few weeks before did not affect the Queen in the smallest degree. But she was glad that Palmerston discountenanced the proposal made by Russia and France, that they and Great Britain, having signed the protocol in Denmark's favour, should send their armies to her aid in her contest with Holstein; though she equally disapproved of Palmerston's plan of getting Austria and Prussia to compel Holstein to keep the peace. (*ib.* ii. 323, October 16, 1850.) And on October 19 she described herself to Lord John as still "very anxious about the Holstein question"; as indeed there was reason to be.

But strongly pro-German as the Queen was, she was far from being pro-Prussian at that time. She even differed from Stockmar on that point, writing of him on August 29, 1848, that "his love for Prussia is to me incomprehensible, for it is the country of all others which the *rest* of Germany dislikes. Stockmar cannot be my good old friend if he has such notions of injustice as I hear attributed to him." (*ib.* ii. 228.) It was not till after the marriage of the Princess Royal to the Crown Prince of Prussia in 1858 that the Queen's sympathy for Prussia became more pronounced.

With the Treaty of London, of May 8, 1852, between the five Great Powers and Norway and Sweden, which tried to secure the integrity of Denmark by settling the order of the succession to the throne, Danish affairs came to a temporary and uneasy rest. And no wonder the rest was uneasy; for diplomacy, surpassing itself in the obscurity of its language and meaning, created all the subsequent difficulties that arose. For did the Treaty commit us or any other Power to the military support of Denmark, as the Treaty of London of 1839 committed us to the military support of Belgium in 1914? Mr. Disraeli thought not, saying on July 4, 1864: "We were not bound by the Treaty of 1852 to go to the assistance of Denmark if she became involved in a war with Germany." (Beaconsfield's *Speeches*, ii. 105.) And so thought Lord Salisbury: "The treaties which give us a

right of interference do not bind us to interfere," he wrote in April 1864. (*Essays*, ii. 191.)

On the other hand, Prince Gortschakoff thought otherwise. He argued fairly that, though the word guarantee did not appear in the Treaty, yet the integrity of the Danish Monarchy was virtually placed under the guarantee of that Treaty; for the signatory Powers had established permanently the principle of such integrity. In the face of so important a "moral guarantee" as had been signed by six of the Powers, he felt bound to reject Lord John Russell's later proposal in May 1861 for a special guarantee of Schleswig by only four of the Powers. (*ib.* ii. 214.)

General opinion took the same common-sense view that, unless Danish integrity was guaranteed by the Treaty, the Treaty was so much waste paper. The whole of Lord John Russell's policy was governed by such a belief in our liability: as when on September 29, 1853, he told the German Diet that Her Majesty could "not view with indifference" a military occupation of Holstein, or when on January 24, 1854, he wrote to Lord Cowley of his endeavour to obtain the concert and co-operation of France, Sweden, and Russia, "to give, if necessary, material assistance to Denmark in case of such dismemberment" of her territory as was threatened. (Sir A. Malet's *Overthrow of the Germanic Confederation*, 84, 86; Beaconsfield's *Speeches*, ii. 117.)

The Queen took an opposite view, and her letter to Lord Russell of May 27, 1861, throws some light on the original construction of the Treaty of 1852. It appears that the absence in the Treaty of any formal guarantee obliging us to take up arms for the thing guaranteed was in deference to the opinion of the British Government, which, on general principles, had always objected to such engagements. She protested strongly, therefore, against Lord Russell's proposal to "renew the *guarantee* of the integrity of the Danish Monarchy contained in the Treaty of May 8, 1852," on the ground that they gave those engagements the force of a guarantee, which had been on principle objected to by us at the time. "Both France and Russia," she said, "object to such a guarantee now, even with regard to Schleswig alone, as involving the guaranteeing powers in future in grave difficulties, and Lord

John proposes to extend it to Holstein, a part of Germany and not of Denmark, by way of obviating the difficulty. The Queen cannot give her sanction to this proposal." (*Letters*, iii. 561, May 27, 1861.)

It seems hardly credible, but here was a treaty designedly framed in order not to bear the meaning which alone could give it any practical value ; to give a pledge which with equal honesty could be kept or broken according to convenience. No wonder it produced a crop of troubles ; so that Lord Salisbury could say of his country in 1864, in language of which he was so great a master, that England had " eaten in the last twelvemonth an amount of dirt at which the digestion of any other people would have revolted." (*Essays*, ii. 188.) That the Queen had never liked the Treaty of 1852 is proved by the fact that many years later she absolved Lord Malmesbury, Foreign Minister in Lord Derby's first Government, from the blame of having signed it, because it had been of Palmerston's designing.

When Lord Malmesbury was again at the Foreign Office in Lord Derby's second Ministry of 1858, the quarrel between Denmark and Germany, so imperfectly laid, showed strong symptoms of reviving life. When Germany refused the Danish proposal for the appointment of joint commissioners of the two countries to settle their differences, Lord Malmesbury proposed that other Powers, including England, should take measures for the protection of Danish integrity. But the Queen, averse to so pro-Danish a step, refused her consent, writing thus to the Foreign Minister on May 1, 1858: " The Queen has received a draft to Lord Cowley on the Danish question, which she cannot sanction as submitted to her. The question is a most important one, and a false step on our part may produce a war between France and Germany. The Queen would wish Lord Malmesbury to call here in the course of to-morrow, when the Prince could discuss the matter with him more fully." (*Letters*, iii. 356.)

Thus the fire only slumbered, though the Treaty of 1852 kept Denmark in at least external peace for eleven years. But the fire burst into very vigorous flame when in November 1863 the death of Frederick VII. of Denmark raised again the difficult question of the succession. In vain had Lord Russell

in the previous year proposed mediation between Denmark and Germany; for, though Bismarck had conditionally accepted the proposal, Denmark had refused it. And the reason of her refusal lay, according to Lord Russell, in the action of a large portion of the English Press, including the *Times* and the *Morning Post*, which not only inflamed the passions of the Danes, but led them to believe in British support against the most moderate demands of Germany. (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 384.) So that all which followed, first the Danish-German War, then the Prussian-Austrian War, then the Franco-Prussian War, might have all been avoided but for the malign influence of the English war press, which desired nothing so little as peace, and succeeded in driving Denmark into war.

The difficulty of the political situation was much enhanced by the unfortunate relations that still continued between the Queen and her two chief Ministers, Lord Russell, her Foreign Secretary, and Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister. Lord Granville, writing to Lord Clarendon on January 16, 1862, said of the Queen: "She retains some of her husband's feelings about Palmerston and John, and this is increased as regards the former by recollections of great enmity between them at one time, although I believe both the men have quite forgotten and forgiven it." (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 406.)

When, therefore, in 1863 war between Denmark and the two German Powers loomed close on the horizon, English opinion took strongly the side of the weaker nation, whilst the Queen was as strongly on the other. As Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice writes: "An ignorant contempt which talked of a war with Germany as a thing which might be undertaken with a light heart gave the prevailing tone to the conversation of London Society, and was unfortunately shared by the two leading statesmen," Russell and Palmerston. Lord Palmerston's remark in the House of Commons on the last day of the session, July 23, 1863, that any Power that made a violent attempt to overthrow the rights of Denmark or to interfere with her integrity would not have Denmark alone to contend with, was naturally construed by Denmark as a promise of military support, though the Cabinet, from Mr. Gladstone's account, seem not so to have understood it. (Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 115–7.)

Meantime the Queen was strong for neutrality. "The Queen," wrote Lord Granville to Lord Clarendon on August 3, 1863, "is up in her stirrups, very German, and determined, if necessary, to resist the Prime Minister." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 453.) She followed the line which she thought would have been the Prince's, and which no doubt would have been strongly anti-Dane, in conformity with the report recorded of him by Mr. Gladstone on January 25, 1861, that he was "*wild* about the Danish question." (*Morley*, ii. 93.) And when Mr. Gladstone was at Balmoral in October 1863 he found her "intensely interested" in the Schleswig-Holstein question, "because the Prince thought it a great case of justice on the side rather opposite to that of Palmerston and the Government policy. She spoke about this with great earnestness, and said she considered it a legacy from him." (*ib.* ii. 102.)

On the other hand, Lord Palmerston's view was, that whilst we could only make a strong and indignant protest if Germany chose to commit an act of gross injustice and diplomatic perfidy against Holstein, because it belonged to the Germanic Confederation, in the matter of Schleswig, which did not so belong to it, an invasion by Germany would be an act of war against Denmark, entitling Denmark to our active military and naval support. (December 26, 1863, Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 388.) Nor had he any illusions on the fundamental fact, which was, as he told Parliament on July 23, 1863, that Germany nourished the dream of a German fleet and the wish for Kiel as a German seaport.

That we were not involved in the war seems to have been mainly due to Napoleon and to the Queen. On November 19, 1863, Napoleon gave Denmark clearly to understand that she could look for no help to France. (Beaconsfield, *Speeches*, ii. 105.) And there were other reasons that made him deaf to all our efforts to involve him in any joint action on behalf of Denmark. He resented the diplomatic rebuff from Russia in which we had involved both France and Austria over Poland; he could still less forgive "the rude tone of Lord Russell's dispatch" in reply to his reasonable proposal on November 5, 1854, for a European Congress; of which dispatch Lord Malmesbury wrote, when it was published in November, that he could not be surprised at the Emperor's

anger. (ii. 304, 308.) Sir A. Malet has suggested that Bismarck kept Napoleon neutral by promises of territorial compensation (*Overthrow, etc.*, 27, 28), but ordinary prudence was motive enough. He is also said to have made the cession of Venetia by Austria (which came to pass in 1866) and the rectification of the Rhine frontier the price of his assistance, and this opened up a prospect from which our statesmen recoiled. (*Political History of England*, xii. 189.)

The Queen's attitude is well put by Lord Malmesbury, who thus wrote in his diary on January 29, 1864: "The Prussians and Austrians are advancing towards the Eider with the intention of entering Schleswig; the Danes are preparing to resist, but can have little chance unless England or France come to their assistance, which the latter, it is said, is ready to do, but the Queen will not hear of going to war with Germany. No doubt this country would like to fight for the Danes and, from what is said, I infer that the Government is inclined to support them also, but finds great difficulties in the opposition of the Queen." (*Memoirs*, ii. 314.)

It was a time of terrible anxiety for the Queen, who was firm as adamant against war. Before Parliament met in February 1864, a paragraph about Germany, which she thought too bellicose, had to be struck out, and a new and more colourless one put in its place.

On February 12, 1864, she thus wrote to Lord Granville, in whom of all her Ministers she found most sympathy: that she "would feel it her duty in the interests of this country and the peace of Europe to resist any proposal for war. The only chance of preserving peace for Europe is by not assisting Denmark, who has brought this entirely on herself. Denmark, after all, is of less vital importance than the peace of Europe, and it would be madness to set the whole Continent on fire for the imaginary advantages of maintaining the integrity of Denmark. . . . The Queen suffers much, and her nerves are more and more totally shattered. . . . But though all this anxiety is wearing her out, it will not shake her in her firm purpose of resisting any attempt to involve this country in a mad and useless combat." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 459.)

Yet at that time Lord Palmerston had no thought of war ; for he wrote to Lord Russell the following day, saying that, whilst he fully shared Lord Russell's indignation, and thought the conduct of Austria and Prussia discreditably bad, he could not countenance the idea of sending an English squadron to Copenhagen and a French army corps to the Rhine frontier in the event of the German Powers refusing mediation on the basis of Danish integrity. He doubted whether the Cabinet or the country were yet prepared for such active interference, and he added : " The truth is, that to enter into a military conflict with Germany on Continental ground would be a serious undertaking. If Sweden and Denmark were actively co-operating with us, our 20,000 men might do a good deal ; but Austria and Prussia could bring 200,000 or 300,000 into the field." (*Ashley*, ii. 246, 247.) So that he and the Queen were at that moment from different points of view of the same mind.

Yet in spite of this letter, written on February 13, it has been said that till a Cabinet held in February both Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell were so conscious of our duty to Denmark that they had ordered Sir Alfred Horsfold to prepare a scheme for an English landing on Denmark, and that they were only diverted from going to war by the " overmastering eloquence of Mr. Gladstone." (Gen. Maurice, *Balance of Military Power in Europe.*) Mr. Gladstone was undoubtedly against war, but the critical Cabinets seem to have come later, on May 7, June 11, June 24, and June 25. (Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 118.) At the Cabinet held on January 4, 1864, Mr. Gladstone and other peace members went almost as far as Palmerston could have wished ; for they agreed to a proposal to France to make a joint announcement to Austria and Prussia that if they prosecuted the quarrel by force " we would jointly resist them with all our might." (*ib.* ii. 116, 117.) It was at this Cabinet that Mr. Gladstone wrote that, often as he had been struck by the Queen's " extraordinary integrity of mind," he had never been so struck by it as by a letter of hers on the Danish question that was read on that occasion. (*ib.* ii. 192.)

Still, it was the Queen's influence that turned the scale in favour of peace. On February 14, 1864, she wrote to Lord

Granville that she was "so thoroughly convinced of the awful danger and recklessness of our stirring up France and Russia to go to war that she would be prepared to make a stand upon it, should it even cause the resignation of Lord Russell. . . . She is quite determined upon it, solely from a regard to the safety of this country and of Europe in general." And she authorised Lord Granville to let his colleagues know her opinion. (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 460.)

Had the Queen been less firm, or sought for popularity, the war of 1914 might have occurred fifty years sooner between the same belligerents of the later time. On February 21, Lord Malmesbury records that Lord Russell informed the Danish Minister that, not even if the Germans went to Copenhagen, could Denmark rely on any help from England. But opinion was much divided. Lord Derby, like all the Conservative party, was for the Danes, whilst the Court remained steadily against them. (*Memoirs*, ii. 318.)

But as the war went on and the Danes suffered inevitable reverses, the war feeling in England grew apace. On May 1, Palmerston warned the Austrian ambassador that it would be regarded as an affront to England if an Austrian squadron on its way to the Baltic should pass along the coasts and ports of England to help the German operations against Denmark. Such a thing he could not and would not stand, and unless an English squadron followed them he would resign. As this meant war, the ambassador, recognising the hopelessness of it, assured Palmerston that no Austrian squadron should enter the Baltic. (*Ashley*, ii. 249–52.)

The Queen, through Lord Granville, expressed strong disapproval of this successful threat, and appealed to the Cabinet against her Prime Minister, inviting also the private support of the Opposition leader, Lord Derby. She even threatened to appeal to the country by a dissolution. (Lee's *Victoria*, 350, 351.)

Lord Palmerston's conversation with the Austrian ambassador was in due course laid before the Cabinet, of which the war party consisted, according to Mr. Gladstone, of Lords Palmerston, Russell, Westbury, and Stanley of Alderley. Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell being for war, even if it were single handed. (*Morley*, ii. 117.) The tumultuous

applause which at a public banquet greeted the statement that the British Fleet was in the Downs and ready to go anywhere showed that the drift of public opinion was in the same direction. Lord Russell, claiming the Cabinet's approval, was about to send Palmerston's conversation to Lord Blomfield, our ambassador at Vienna, when he was fortunately stopped by a letter from Lord Granville intimating that he was mistaken in his belief of the Cabinet's approval.

The Queen became justly alarmed, and some sharp correspondence ensued between her secretary, General Grey, and Lord Russell. On May 9, 1864, the General wrote for her to Lord Granville: "Her Majesty will insist, before she goes to Scotland, upon no important step being taken without having been fully and maturely considered by the Cabinet, before it is submitted to Her Majesty's approval. And she relies upon the Cabinet, and particularly upon yourself, to ease her from being dragged unnecessarily into this miserable war." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 465.)

This pacifist attitude on the part of the Queen was more than the English war party could bear. Headed by Lord Ellenborough in the Lords, it attacked the Queen viciously for her anti-Dane attitude, and Lord Russell defended her. General Grey, writing for her to Lord Granville on May 28, 1864, said that "it naturally filled her with indignation to hear of such base and malignant attacks being *insinuated* against her by Lord Ellenborough. . . . She is also a good deal hurt that Lord Derby," as the head of Lord Ellenborough's party, "should not have said a word in contradiction or of condemnation of Lord Ellenborough. . . . But Lord Ellenborough must have meant to do mischief, and to take advantage of the dissatisfaction which doubtless exists at the Queen's continued seclusion, to make charges which, though he *must* know them himself to be utterly groundless, are precisely those which our *gobe-mouches* public swallows most greedily." She hoped that "somehow or other Lord Ellenborough might hear what she thought of him." (*ib.* i. 465, 466.)

The episode was one of the Queen's worst experiences. The Tory attack was followed by a letter from her uncle lamenting the bitter feeling that was rising up against her,

but worst of all by a letter from Lord Russell in answer to one of gratitude from herself for his defence of her in the Lords, "written in his *coldest, hardest style*," and "quietly assuming that she might inadvertently have given occasion to the attacks made against her." General Grey, in a letter to Lord Granville of June 1, 1864, said that he had never seen the Queen "so completely upset as she has been these last few days"; he should vainly attempt to describe how much she felt Lord Russell's letter, when, instead of the comfort and support she had expected, she had received nothing but "the cold, unfeeling insinuation that she might have given occasion to what had been said." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 468.) And so far were the charges of pro-Germanism from being true that she had almost quarrelled with her daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, by deprecating the violent counsels which Prussia had seemed disposed to pursue, and pointing to the strong feeling that had been created against her in England. (*ib.* i. 467.) All she had struggled for, as she wrote to Lord Granville on June 6, 1864, were (1) not to let this country be dragged into a useless war; (2) not to agree to an impermanent settlement; (3) not to let a sovereign be imposed on the Duchies against their will. How keenly she felt her position is indicated by the pathetic conclusion: "Oh, how fearful it is to be suspected—uncheered—unguided and unadvised—and how alone the poor Queen feels! Her friends must defend her." With which compare her letter to the Duke of Argyll on July 13, 1893: "I feel so grateful to you for helping me in my difficult position, as I feel so utterly alone." (*Autobiography*, ii. 557.)

On June 23, 1864, she wrote to Lord Granville, deprecating in the strongest way the thought of an alliance with France on behalf of Denmark. She spoke of "the enormous danger of allying ourselves with France, who would drag us into a war in Italy and on the Rhine and set all Europe in a blaze"; declared that, if the Germans were unreasonable, the Danes were much more so; and that if the Danes really believed and knew that we should not help them, they would soon give up. "The Queen," she went on, "is completely exhausted by the anxiety and suspense, and misses her beloved husband's help, advice, support, and love in an overwhelming

manner. . . . Her Ministers should know how heavy her responsibility is, and should lighten it by pursuing a prudent course, and one which she feels is really for the country's interests."

Meantime Cabinets were sitting with much divided counsels on May 7, June 11, and June 24; nor was it till one held on June 25 that the Government came to what Mr. Gladstone termed "a tolerable, not the best conclusion." (*Morley*, ii. 118.) But on June 27 the foreign crisis was still, in Mr. Gladstone's words, drowning them deeper than ever. He believed that we should not go to war, and was sure that we ought not, but was anxious for the fate of the Government. (*ib.* ii. 192.)

When with the close of the armistice during the Conference in London hostilities began again on June 27 between Germany and Denmark, Lord Malmesbury heard Lord Russell in the Lords make a two hours' speech, which was to the effect "that the Government was for peace at any price, and meant to desert the Danes." (*Memoirs*, ii. 326.) The same day the Queen, deploring the obstinacy of the Danes in refusing every proposal, made a last effort for peace, advocating mediation, to which she was sure that *all* the German Powers would agree, or, failing that, our taking no further part in the matter.

But all suggestions of mediation or concession were spurned by the Danish Prime Minister, who hoped to the last for the armed intervention of England or France. So the war ran its course, till the Treaty of Vienna of October 30, 1864, finally transferred the contested and conquered Duchies to German dominion. Vain was the condemnation of the Government's policy by the Lords in early July, and vain the four days' debate in the Commons against it. Contrary to the Queen's expectation, the claims of the Duke of Augustenburg to the Elbe Duchies were not recognised by Austria and Prussia, who insisted on their rights of conquest. So on August 25, 1864, she conveyed her opinion to Lord Granville against our taking further concern in the matter, only wishing Prussia to be made aware "of what she and her Government, and every honest man in Europe, must think of the gross and unblushing violation of every assurance and

pledge that she had given, which Prussia had been guilty of." (*Fitzmaurice*, i. 476.)

And in this opinion she was at one with her Government; for Lord Russell in reply to the formal announcement of the joint occupation of the Duchies by the German Powers did not shrink from telling Bismarck that the war had been one of unjust aggression, and that the British Government lamented the success of the Prussian and Austrian arms. (Lee's *Victoria*, 351.)

The whole episode, thus concluded, was of the greatest constitutional interest, as showing the great powers still exercisable by the Crown in the realm of foreign policy. For the Queen did more than express opinions adverse to those of her chief Ministers and of a large section of public opinion; she insisted on their prevailing. She saved the country from war in spite of itself; and this must be put down on the credit side of the system that enabled her to do so.

At the same time it is far from certain that Palmerston's and Russell's policy would have resulted in war. Palmerston thought not. Writing to the King of Belgium on August 28, 1864, whilst stigmatising the Danish war as not "a page in German history which any honourable or generous German hereafter would not look back upon without a blush," he expressed the wish "that France and Russia had consented to join with us in giving a different direction to these affairs; and I am convinced that words from three such Powers would have been sufficient without recourse to blows." (*Ashley*, ii. 256.) Still, he thought it not amiss that the power of Prussia should be increased by the accession of the Duchies; for he deemed it desirable that Germany in the aggregate should be strong, "in order to control those two ambitious and aggressive powers, France and Russia, that press upon her east and west." (*ib.* ii. 270.) A later opinion of the same sort was expressed by General Maurice, who hazarded the idea that the formation of a United Germany in the centre of Europe might prove to be "the event of our time which in the long run will most tend to the happiness of the human race."

The same authority thought that we should have taken the risk; that we might have taken up positions where,

protected by the guns of our fleet, our army "could have defied the utmost efforts of the Austro-Prussian forces to break down their resistance." But, even from the merely military point of view, posterity may be grateful to the Queen and to Napoleon for having insured our neutrality. For the Prussian Army was already provided with the needle breech-loader, which was destined to prove so fatal against Austria only two years later; and it was not till after 1866 that our Army discarded the musket. (*Malmesbury*, ii. 315, 319.)

CHAPTER VIII

The Crown and the Army

The total result of the many changes in military organisation that marked the Queen's reign was to remove from the Crown to Parliament the real control of the Army. There was no part of her prerogative to which the Queen clung more closely than her relation to the services, which she regarded as her own property and province rather than as in any real sense the nation's.

Thus, when Lord Hill resigned the command of the Army, the Queen wrote to him on August 12, 1842, that she could only reluctantly consent to it, as she regretted "to lose Lord Hill's services at the head of her Army." (*Letters*, i. 528.) Writing to Lord Panmure on February 28, 1855, she spoke of "her noble, brave, and unequalled soldiers (whom she is so proud to call her own)." (*Panmure Papers*, i. 86.)

When the Duke of Newcastle sent her a dispatch destined for Lord Raglan, she returned it with only one remark, namely, the entire omission of her name throughout the document: "It speaks simply in the name of the *People* of England, and of *their* sympathy, whilst the Queen feels it to be one of her highest prerogatives and dearest duties to care for the welfare and success of *her* Army." (*Letters*, iii. 86, January 12, 1855.)

The Army was always the Queen's predominant interest. Lord Panmure, writing to Lord Raglan on March 25, 1855, said: "You never saw anybody so entirely taken up with military affairs as she (the Queen) is" (*Panmure Papers*, i. 126), and so it was always. Nothing connected with the Army was too minute for her solicitude. When in 1848 many British officers had fallen in action at the hands of the Boers, she attributed their heavy loss to their being dressed in blue, whilst their men were in scarlet, and, in anticipation of the

plan of later times, she wisely recommended a greater assimilation in the costume of officers and men. (*Letters*, ii. 238, 239.)

Notwithstanding her preference for peace, she delighted in the exploits of war: as shown by the unbounded joy she expressed at the successes of the Austrians over the Piedmontese in 1849; writing about which to her uncle she said: "I could work myself up to great excitement about these exploits, for there is nothing I admire more than great military exploits and daring." (*ib.* ii. 260.)

This feeling that the Army was in a peculiar sense her own possession made her constantly sensitive of any encroachment on that principle. Thus, though much of her time was spent in signing commissions for officers, she would not listen to a plan suggested for reducing the labour: "The Queen does not at all object to the amount of trouble which the signature of so many commissions has hitherto entailed upon her, as she feels amply compensated by the advantage of keeping up a personal connection between the Sovereign and the Army." (*ib.* ii. 219, July 14, 1848.) Fourteen years later, however, when the arrears of such documents to be signed amounted to 16,000, she welcomed the Bill of March 1862 which dispensed with her autograph for the issue of commissions, though it left her free to resume the practice at any time. Of that freedom she availed herself again early in the nineties, and when in 1895 the work again fell into arrears she declined the suggestion of again desisting from the personal labour involved. (Lee's *Victoria*, 515.)

From the same feeling she was very jealous of any inroad on the principle of the Crown's being the only fountain of honour: as when after the Crimean War a return was moved for in the Commons of all the decorations of the Bath given since the war. She immediately felt her prerogative imperilled, writing to Lord Palmerston on February 14, 1856, that she hoped "the Government would not allow the House of Commons so much further to trespass upon the prerogatives of the Crown as now *virtually* to take also the control over the distribution of honours and rewards into their hands." (*Letters*, iii. 218.)

For the same reason she set her face strongly against the proposal that marks of military honour might be con-

ferred by the East India Company: it would set up two fountains of honour in the realm.

A debate took place in the Commons on July 7, 1858, of which next day the Queen complained to Lord Derby, the Prime Minister. She was "shocked to find that in several important points her Government has surrendered the prerogative of the Crown"; the proposal to appoint Indian Civil servants by examination was an infringement on the "undoubted right and duty of the Executive" to make regulations about the servants of the Crown; whilst, as to the right of the Crown to declare war and make peace, Mr. Gladstone's proposal that without Parliamentary sanction the Queen's Indian forces should not be used outside India placed her in a position "of less authority than the President of the American Republic." She complained bitterly of Bills on such subjects, after having been introduced into Parliament with her approval, being materially altered without her further sanction, and she reminded Lord Derby that she looked to him as head of the Government to protect those prerogatives, which formed an integral part of the Constitution." (*Letters*, iii. 374, July 8, 1858.)

The danger of lack of definition on such points is shown by the further history of the Competitive-examination innovation. The Commons' rejection by thirteen of the Lords' amendments on the subject placed the Queen, as she complained to Lord Derby on July 29, 1858, "in a most unpleasant dilemma." Whilst agreeing to adopt Lord Derby's advice to accept the decision as final rather than risk another defeat and raise a struggle over the Royal prerogative, she could "hardly sit still and from mere want of courage become a party to the most serious inroad that had yet been made upon it." She felt herself bound to resist the principle that the Sovereign was no longer the source of all appointments under the Crown; and the extension of the principle from civil to military appointments, as advocated by some, would reduce the Sovereign "to a mere signing machine." (*ib.* iii. 377.) With such thorny problems, dangerous and undefined, did our unwritten Constitution then bristle, as it bristles still.

The relationship between the Crown and the Army led

to certain incidents which help to illustrate the struggle that continued for a large part of the Queen's reign between herself and Parliament over the Army. On the formation of Lord Palmerston's second Government in July 1859, the Queen, writing to him on July 6, expressed herself as "much shocked" because without previous consultation with herself the Government had moved for a Committee of the Commons to inquire into the Military Department. She requested to have the names of the Committee submitted to her. Lord Palmerston, in his reply, touched on the constitutional side of the Queen's remonstrance. He protested that the idea that the Crown could act in military matters without any official adviser responsible for its acts would be "at variance with the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and would be fraught with danger to the Crown, because then the Sovereign might be held personally answerable for administrative acts, and would be brought personally in conflict in possible cases with public opinion: a most dangerous condition for a Sovereign to be placed in." (*ib.* iii. 449.) And this after the Queen had been more than twenty years on the throne.

In April 1850 the Duke of Wellington urged the Prince to become Commander-in-Chief of the Army. The reason for the proposal was that "with the daily growth of the democratic power the Executive got weaker and weaker, and it was of the utmost importance to the stability of the Throne and the Constitution that the command of the Army should remain in the hands of the Sovereign, and not fall into those of the House of Commons." (*Martin*, ii. 255.) Fortunately, the Prince was deaf to the voice of the tempter, but the incident shows the reality of the peril which was so narrowly escaped.

On the death of the Duke of Wellington in 1852 the office of Commander-in-Chief, which had been instituted in 1793, to release the King from the personal command of the Army, and which continued till 1904, gave rise to a correspondence between the Prince and Lord Palmerston which showed some doubt as to the person in whom the appointment to the office was vested. Lord Palmerston, who had been Secretary at War from 1809 to 1828, claimed

it for the Secretary at War. But the Prince considered this only an attempt on the part of Lord Palmerston to arrogate supreme power for his office for which there was no foundation. (*Letters*, ii. 477.) Thus the struggle continued.

The idea that the Army and Navy belonged rather to the Crown than to the nation led naturally to the conclusion that the size of both, and the policy for which they were to be used, were more a matter for the Crown than for Parliament. In the anarchical condition of Europe during the nineteenth century preparations for emergencies were always necessary, but the practical question then, as it is now, was one of degree, and should naturally rest for decision with the Cabinet of the time. But the Queen and the Prince never took this view; they thought the matter their special province, and constantly harried the responsible Ministers with suggestions which differed little from commands. Thus the Queen wrote to Lord Derby on November 13, 1852, that she "must most strongly impress Lord Derby with the necessity of referring to our defenceless state, and the necessity of a *large* outlay, to protect us from foreign attack." (*ib.* ii. 484.) And when the heavy cost of the Crimean War naturally drove Ministers to think of economies at its close, and made them consider retrenchments in the services before even peace was signed, the Court protested immediately. The Queen wrote to Lord Palmerston on April 12, 1856, that she trusted and *expected* that such retrenchments should be carried out "with great *moderation* and very *gradually*," and that our sufferings and difficulties might not be forgotten, for "to the miserable reductions of the last thirty years are entirely owing our state of *helplessness* when the war began"; and it would be unpardonable if another war, as possibly with France, found us in the same condition again. (*ib.* iii. 239.)

The Court condemned all retrenchments made since 1826, and all the Ministers who had effected them during that time. It did its best to veto further retrenchments. On May 21, 1856, the Queen expressed herself to Lord Palmerston as "very anxious about the fixing of our Peace Establishment, both for the Army and the Navy." She scanned with displeasure the speeches in Parliament that advocated

economy, and was "sorry to find Mr. Disraeli, Mr. Gladstone, and Sir Francis Baring agreeing with the doctrine of the *Times* and Lord Grey that we ought *not* to improve our state of preparation for war." (*ib.* iii. 243, 244.) In a letter to Lord Panmure, Secretary for War in Palmerston's Ministry of 1855, she complained that "the absence of all plans for our defence is a great evil, and hardly credible. There should exist a well-considered general scheme for each place supported by a detailed argument; this when approved by the Government should be sanctioned and signed by the Sovereign," etc. (*ib.* iii. 269.)

In a letter to Lord Palmerston of July 19, 1857, the Queen complained vigorously of the retrenchments that had been made to "meet the Parliamentary pressure for economy." She complained of "this miserable reduced Peace Establishment," and insisted on the necessity of *immediate* measures of which the principle might be left to the Cabinet, but the details to the *unfettered* execution of the military authorities. For "the present position of the Queen's Army is a pitiable one." (*Martin*, iii. 78–82.) As the Prince Consort wrote to the Prince of Prussia that same month, in reference to the Indian Mutiny: "The English public is calm and composed, the Ministry too much so, and therefore we are constantly digging our spurs into their sides." (*ib.* iii. 88.)

In all this the responsibility of Ministers was thought of as due to the Crown rather than to Parliament. And the spur was naturally galling. On August 2, 1857, Lord Palmerston was told that the measures taken by the Government for the salvation of India were "by no means adequate to the emergency." In not laying up a store of troops nor formed reserves for a long struggle we were "always most short-sighted, and had finally to suffer either in power and reputation, or to pay enormous sums for small advantages in the end—generally both." The Queen hoped the Cabinet would look the question boldly in the face. Lord Clarendon read this letter to the Cabinet, and promised the Queen to "use his utmost endeavours to induce his colleagues to admit the indisputable fact that we are utterly defenceless. The thought of this haunts Lord Clarendon by day and by night." (*ib.* iv. 91.) Indisputable as our command of the sea was, no

amount of it sufficed to relieve Lord Clarendon or the Court from fears of invasion. So on August 4 the Queen again dug the spur into the unhappy Palmerston: "The defenceless state of our shores, now that the Army has been reduced to eighteen effective battalions, and the evident inclinations of the Continental Powers, chiefly France and Russia, to dictate to us with regard to the Oriental Question," naturally led her to consider our naval preparations. She demanded a report on the force of screw-ships of the Line and other classes; she did not want a mere general answer on such subjects from the Lords of the Admiralty, but detailed reports from the Admirals in the ports, and that without the loss of unnecessary time. She requested Lord Palmerston to have these her wishes carried out. (*Letters*, iii. 307.) On August 22 it was: "The Queen must repeat to Lord Palmerston that the measures hitherto taken by the Government are not commensurate with the magnitude of the crisis." (*ib.* iii. 308.) In vain the Prime Minister tried to pacify the Queen; for she replied the same day that whilst she herself, the House of Lords, the House of Commons, and the Press all called out for vigorous exertion, the Government alone took an apologetic line, anxious to do as little as possible and to reduce as low as possible. Again Lord Palmerston tried to reassure her, but in vain; for on August 25 she wrote: "The Queen has received Lord Palmerston's letter of yesterday, and must say she is deeply grieved at her want of success in impressing upon him the importance of meeting the present dangers by agreeing on and maturing a general plan by which to replace in kind the troops sent out of the country." (*ib.* iii. 311.) When one remembers that all the Queen's letters were virtually the Prince's, the only wonder is that with the scolding tone so often employed towards the Prime Minister the friction between the Court and Palmerston did not come to an open rupture.

The situation is illuminated by the Prince's letters to his real counsellor, Stockmar, at the time. "The events in India," writes the Prince, "are very tragical, and demonstrate the utterly decrepit state of an army which rests upon civil government and the Press." The Government, he complained, were ready to let "our poor little army be wasted

away, and to make fine grandiose speeches." (*Martin*, iv. 92.) On September 7, 1857, he writes: "The Indian news continues very bad, and causes us much anxiety. Our military organisations for averting disasters so great are quite inadequate, and we have to bully and extort from the Ministers bit by bit." Palmerston was again possessed "by all his juvenile levity." (*ib.* iv. 125.) Clearly the Prince would have preferred an army solely dependent on the Crown.

Even Lord Clarendon, the Court's favourite Foreign Minister, said that he underwent such lectures from the Prince and the Queen about second battalions and extra companies that his head was "in a terrible confusion about the subject of recruiting." So Lord Granville told Lord Canning in a letter of September 9, 1857. (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 259.) The spur was too constant for comfort.

On December 14, 1857, the Queen pressed for the immediate formation of two new cavalry regiments, and on December 19 she sent Lord Panmure her orders for the next year's army. "She wishes now to lay down the principle which she thinks ought to guide our decision, and asks Lord Palmerston to consider it with his colleagues in Cabinet. . . . What the Queen requires is that a well-considered and digested estimate should be made of the additional regiments, etc. . . . Anything else than this will not leave this country in a safe condition." (*Letters*, iii. 326.) There is not a thought in all this of the responsibility of the War Minister to the Cabinet, or of the Cabinet to the country. The Crown was to be the director and dictator in all such matters.

Well therefore could the Queen write to King Leopold on January 12, 1858, of "how *sound* and *monarchical* everything is in this country"; and could boast on February 9 of Prince Albert's having "raised monarchy to the *highest* pinnacle of *respect*, and rendered it *popular* beyond what it *ever* was in this country." (*ib.* iii. 334, 335.) But he was raising it to something more than respect; he was raising it to supreme power in the State.

So far did this go that it began to be of more importance what the Army would stand than of what Parliament wished. For not only did the Court dislike the civil government of the Army, but it was ready to throw the Army into the scales

against Parliament. When the House of Commons passed a resolution in favour of placing the whole control of the Army under a single Minister, the Queen told Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, that she could not "contemplate the possibility of any *real* attempt to divest the Crown of its prerogative in this instance. The Army will not, she feels sure, stand it for a moment, and the Queen feels sure that, if properly defined and explained, the House of Commons will not acquiesce in any such disloyal proceeding." (*Letters*, iii. 372, June 4, 1858.)

In August 1858, when the Queen and Prince attended the festivities at the opening of the arsenal at Cherbourg, nothing was pleasanter than the civilities exchanged between them and the French Emperor. But the Court's mistrust of France was incurable, being constantly sustained by the apprehensions of the King of Belgium, who after the Cherbourg visit gave the Queen the following advice: "Two things can be done—(1) to make every reasonable exertion to remain on personal good terms with the Emperor—which can be done. One party in England says it is with the French nation that you are to be on loving terms; this cannot be, as the French dislike the English as a nation, though they may be kind to you also personally. (2) The next is, instead of a good deal of unnecessary abuse, to have the Navy so organised that it can and must be superior to the French. All beyond these two points is sheer nonsense." (*ib.* iii. 375.)

Under such influence the Prince saw nothing in the completion of Cherbourg but the facilities it afforded for the transport of a French army to our shores in four hours (*Martin*, iv. 261); and he wrote thus to the Duchess of Kent: "The war preparations of the French marine are immense, ours despicable. Our Ministers use fine phrases, but they do nothing. My blood boils within me." (*ib.* iv. 277.) So immediately on their return he and the Queen pressed on Lord Derby the increase of the Navy. And this attitude of panic, which greatly cancelled the beneficial effects of the Queen's visit, naturally spread to the public, Cherbourg being made "a text for very unmeasured attacks upon France and the French Emperor by some of our public men and many of the leading Journals." (*ib.* iv. 277.)

The process of what the Prince called "bullying"

Ministers never stopped. On January 13, 1859, the Queen, in view of the estimates for the year, again pressed on Lord Derby additional expenditure. She had "heard it rumoured that the Government intended to propose a reduction on the estimates of 9000 men for this year. She trusted that such an idea, if ever entertained, would upon reflection be given up as inconsistent with the duty which the Government owed the country." For England would not be listened to in Europe, if she were known "to be despicably weak in her military resources." (*Letters*, iii. 396.)

The Commission on the Indian army was then about to issue its report, and on February 5, 1859, she wrote to Lord Derby, insisting that the Indian army should remain under the Horse Guards. (Malmesbury's *Memoirs*, ii. 154.) She declared her "firm determination not to sanction under any form the creation of a British army, distinct from that known at present as the Army of the Crown." She hoped that Lord Derby would not consider that she intended by her letter "unduly to influence his free consideration and decision as to the advice he might think it his duty to offer, but merely to guard against his being taken by surprise, and to prevent, if possible, an unseemly difference between herself and Lord Stanley. She was impelled to the apprehension that such might arise from the manner in which, since the first transfer of the Indian Government to the Crown, every act of Lord Stanley had uniformly tended to place the Queen in a position which would render her helpless and powerless in resisting a scheme which certain persons, imbued with the old Indian traditions, would appear to wish to force upon the Crown." (*Letters*, iii. 404–5, February 5, 1859.)

Despite the Queen's disclaimer of a wish for an answer, Lord Derby did answer this letter next day. He said that the Queen's letter had given him deep pain, and that he feared he might feel compelled to resign. For, though she disclaimed all wish to influence his judgment, she distinctly warned him that his advice, unless tendered in a particular direction, had no chance of her acceptance. The incident closed satisfactorily, thanks to the good sense shown by both correspondents, but it serves to illustrate the friction that resulted from the indefinite claims of the Crown in the military department of

public affairs. (*Letters*, iii. 404–10.) Nor was the question quite settled; for on February 13, 1859, the Queen wrote to General Peel, relying "with confidence that when the question of the Indian army came before the Cabinet, General Peel would stoutly defend the interests of the Crown and the British Army. On the opinion which he would give and maintain much of their decision must depend, and unless he spoke out boldly the Indian Secretary (Lord Stanley) would have it all his own way." (*ib.* iii. 410.) Thus did the Queen and the Prince systematically seek to prevail over their Ministers.

And this feeling of antagonism between the respective claims of the Crown and of Parliament over the services continued during the Prince's life and for long after his death.

The process by which the Army came under the control of Parliament was very gradual, but was quickened by the experiences of the Crimean War in 1854 and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

The office of Commander-in-Chief, instituted in 1793, set up a dual control of the Army, the Commander being over the Horse Guards, and regarding as his subordinate the Secretary at War, who was over the War Office. The Secretary at War, dating from Charles II.'s time, was not made responsible to Parliament till 1783, and the Prince Regent insisted on his issuing no new orders without previous communication with the Commander-in-Chief. In 1863 the Secretary at War was abolished, and his duties transferred to the Secretary of State for War. The latter, first instituted in 1794, was responsible to Parliament, and his powers grew, after much confusion of functions and responsibilities, till at last in 1870 the Commander-in-Chief was formally declared subordinate to the Minister of War. But till the Commander was abolished in 1904 and his place taken by the Chief of the Staff, relations were never satisfactory nor well defined. Sidney Herbert, as Minister of War, wished in 1860 to abolish the office, and so put the Army under the House of Commons: on which Lord Malmesbury's comment was that the Queen had every right to be angry with such an interference with the rights of the Crown. (ii. 217.) And there was evidently an attempt on the part of

the Crown on October 2, 1861, to remove from the Secretary for War and to attach to the Commander-in-Chief the command and discipline of the Army, and military appointments and promotions: or, in other words, to secure for the Crown the control over this very important province of military affairs. (Biddulph's *Cardwell at the War Office*, 217, 262.)

The remarkable document which attests this attempt was never acted on, but laid aside, and only found by chance in 1868 among the papers of Sir George Lewis, Secretary for War at the time. It convinced the Gladstone Government that the time had clearly come to smother the fire that had been smouldering for so many years, and amongst the Cardwell military reforms of 1870 none was more important than that which vested the direct control of every branch of Army administration in the Secretary for War, and made him responsible for everything. This was effected by the War Office Act of 1870 (33 & 34 Vict. c. 17), and by subsequent Orders in Council. (*ib.* 238–40; Anson's *Constitution*, ii. pt. ii. 200–8.) Another sign of the wish to do away with the dual control was the removal of the Horse Guards Staff to the same building as that occupied by the Secretary for War in Pall Mall. (*Biddulph*, 142.)

But all these military reforms, of which the foregoing is the barest outline, found in the Queen a strong opponent as so many invasions by Parliament on the peculiar province of the Crown. Twice had she resisted or postponed proposals for the subordination of the Commander-in-Chief to the Secretary of State for War, as through the former she claimed to control the Army without let or hindrance from Ministers or Parliament, and it was with much reluctance that on June 28, 1870, she signed the Order in Council which removed the Commander from his sole and immediate dependence on the Crown. (Lee's *Victoria*, 409.) She equally disliked the Reform of 1895, which, by limiting the tenure of the Commandership to five years instead of for life, finally destroyed the fiction that the Commander was the personal representative of the Sovereign. (*ib.* 512.)

Nor was it with more satisfaction that in 1871, in order to avoid a conflict between the two Houses over the abolition

of the purchase of commissions in the Army, she cancelled the warrant that originally legalised it. The question had come up in 1856, but had been no less strongly opposed by Lord Palmerston and Lord Panmure than by herself. It was then shelved by the familiar device of referring it to a Commission, and, to justify the names selected to serve, Lord Panmure, in a letter to the Queen of April 20, 1856, frankly avowed that the object of the selection was to choose "men in whom the House of Commons had confidence and in whose hands as a body the system of purchase was safe."

The report of Lord Airey's Committee, proposing to "unlink" battalions, in order to remedy certain defects in the short-service system, placed the Minister at issue with the Queen; for whilst he thought the proposal distinctly reactionary, the Queen wrote to him that she much regretted that it had "not been thought advisable to unlink battalions." She strongly opposed Childers' scheme for the linking of battalions and giving regiments territorial designations, as likely to weaken their *esprit de corps.* (*Lee*, 4 and 2.) In reference to the other far-reaching changes involved in his plan she insisted against his coming to any decision till it had been first submitted to herself. (*Life of Childers*, ii. 38, 39.) And to the opposition of the Queen was added the equally strong opposition of the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief, who was "distressed to find himself so strongly at variance with some of the Secretary's decisions. Such differences were most disagreeable to him when they were working so pleasantly and cordially together." (*ib.* ii. 41, November 20, 1880.)

So adverse was the Queen to all these changes that Mr. Childers found himself obliged to remind the Queen of the change of Government: the late Conservative Government had a majority that was content with things as they were, whereas he himself had to deal with a majority of 160 pledged to administrative reform. (*ib.* i. 277.)

And her old fear of diminished armaments still haunted her. When news came of the defeat at Maiwand in the Afghan War, she told Childers through her Secretary that she trusted no reductions in the Army were contemplated,

and asked whether on the contrary an increase should not rather be thought of. (*ib.* i. 273, August 2, 1880.)

The relationship between the Commander-in-Chief and the War Minister still remained an impossible one, and the strange idea was held "by nearly all military officers, that the Secretary of State was usurping power and acting illegally." (*ib.* ii. 70, March 16, 1882.) The following extract from the Duke of Cambridge's letter to Childers of August 7, 1881, in reference to the latter's wish to drop the title of the Horse Guards, shows the position: "The *command* of the Army rests with the Commander-in-Chief, as representing the Sovereign; the Secretary of State is the high political official who controls all Army matters and represents the Department for which he is responsible to Parliament. But he certainly does not command the Army. It would be impossible for a civilian to do so. . . . Consequently the command-in-chief cannot be merged in the Secretary of State under present conditions, and my position must have an individuality, which it is essential and necessary to maintain. Letters and orders therefore emanating from me cannot be simply dated from the War Office." (*ib.* ii. 52.)

So unsatisfactory became the situation that on January 19, 1882, Mr. Childers in a speech at Pontefract felt it time to become explicit on the subject. He laid special stress on one of the many adverse criticisms directed against his policy, namely, against the suggestion "that of late years successive Secretaries of State for War had, in the government of the Army, been encroaching on the functions of others. The Army, these critics say, is the Army of the Crown; we, Secretaries of State forsooth, want to make it the army of the House of Commons. The Crown, they say, governs the Army through the Commander-in-Chief. The Secretary of State is a mere financial officer, who has gradually intruded on the province of the Crown by means of the power of the purse."

This Mr. Childers declared a mere delusion. The Queen was the undoubted head of the Army, as she was of the Navy, and of every other branch of the public service, and as such could do no wrong. But she only could do no

wrong because all her acts were the acts of her responsible Minister. The functions of the Secretary for War had been laid down with great precision by the Order of the Queen in Council of June 1870, and under him were three great departments, responsible to him, and including the Commandership-in-Chief. "No act of discipline can be exercised, no appointment or promotion can be made, no troops can be moved, no payments can be made, without the approval, expressed or implied, of the Secretary of State." (*Life of Childers*, ii. 57.) And thus the constitutional principle of the subordination of the services to Parliament was strongly and conclusively reasserted. But it shows how we were drifting in the wrong direction, that after more than forty years of the Queen's reign it should have been necessary to affirm that the Army belonged to the nation, and not to the Crown.

But though the changes indicated above seemed to settle definitely that the Army was the nation's and subject to Parliamentary control, still the position of the Commander-in-Chief remained not altogether a happy one. With direct access to the Sovereign, and as sole military adviser to the Secretary for War, he continued to occupy a semi-independent position in relation to the latter; nor was it till after the Hartington Commission had reported in 1890 in favour of the abolition of the office, and the transfer of its duties to a Chief of the Staff, that the Commandership-in-Chief came to an end in 1904, when the new Army Council was created, and therewith the Constitutional question was set at rest.

CHAPTER IX

Queen Victoria and Mr. Gladstone

In a letter to the Queen of February 26, 1868, Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, alluded to her constant communion with great men, to her knowledge and management of important transactions, added to her natural great abilities, as having formed an experience that gave her an "advantage in judgment which few living persons, and probably no living prince, could rival." (*Life*, iv. 591.) And this was said, not from flattery, but from conviction; for it formed the basis of his celebrated speech at the Crystal Palace in defence of Constitutional Monarchy on April 3, 1872, where he argued that it was one great merit of our system, in view of the tendency of party government to warp men's intelligence, that before a Minister can introduce a measure to Parliament, he must first submit it to an intelligence that is "superior to all party, and entirely free from all influences of that character." (*Speeches*, ii. 493.) Yet from George III. onwards such superiority to party is the last thing that can be predicated of any of our Sovereigns. Queen Victoria ended as strongly on the Conservative side of politics as she had begun strongly on the other, and her whole reign was one of steadily progressive Conservatism. If she complied with her constitutional duty of submission to her Ministers, it was often a most reluctant submission.

Nor does Lord Beaconsfield's defence take any account of the extraordinary difficulty which such anticipated reluctance places in the way of a Minister whose mandate from the electorate is for the introduction of specific reforms. During the whole of Mr. Gladstone's career, for instance, it was the tragedy of his life to be confronted with the opposition of a Sovereign whom Lord Morley has described as "a personage with a singular fixity of nature." (ii. 425.) In

comparing a monarchy like ours with other forms of government, it must be borne in mind that under republican systems the Executive power never remains for more than a limited time in the hands of one person, and that, therefore, under such systems, statesmen often suffer from less discouragement than is their inevitable portion where Royal opposition to their policy may extend from decade to decade.

Mr. Gladstone's experience affords a conspicuous illustration of this truth. The same passage of events that made him more and more Liberal made the Queen more and more Conservative, till at last the divergence between them stopped hardly short of avowed hostility.

The difference began when Mr. Gladstone and other Peelites forsook Lord Palmerston's Ministry in 1855, in the middle of the Crimean War, and, much to the offence of the Court, threw the weight of their influence on the side that wished to stop the war. But in 1864 this sin of Mr. Gladstone was atoned for by his efforts in sympathy with the Queen's to oppose the policy of war with Germany on behalf of Denmark to which Lord Palmerston and Lord Russell seemed to be drifting. In the following year, Lord Palmerston died (October 18, 1865), and the Queen turned to Lord Russell as his successor as Prime Minister, writing to him that she could turn to no other, "an old and tried friend of hers to undertake the arduous duties of Prime Minister, and to carry on the Government." (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 407.) In reality, she was glad of a change which enabled her favourite Lord Clarendon to take Lord Russell's place at the Foreign Office. (*Lee*, 362.) In this new Government, afterwards described by the Duke of Argyll as one which "had no faith in any principle, no enthusiasm in any cause, and no fidelity to any leader" (*Autobiography*, ii. 249), Mr. Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer, was promoted to the leadership of the House of Commons, and on February 19, 1866, the Queen wrote him a most gracious letter expressing her gratification at the accounts she heard from all sides of the admirable manner in which he had conducted his leadership in the House of Commons. (*Morley*, ii. 157.)

But these halcyon days had no long stay. Lord Russell was resolved to press his Reform Bill, and when the time came

that he had to warn the Queen of his anticipated defeat, she declared that she would accept of no resignations whilst the imminent trouble between Austria and Prussia threatened an eruption of the European volcano. Yet she would not be dissuaded from moving from Windsor to Balmoral, and insisted on a ministerial crisis being averted at all costs. When the inevitable defeat happened, and the resignations followed her to Balmoral, she protested strongly, and when Lord Russell declined to reconsider his resignation, she resented his withdrawal as an act of desertion, nor easily suffered her anger to cool. (*Lee*, 368.) Gladstone, of course, incurred his share of the Royal displeasure on this occasion.

With Lord Derby's third Government, which followed, the Queen was on more sympathetic relations, both on domestic and foreign politics. The Emperor Napoleon's proposals in May 1866 for a European Congress had met, unfortunately, with its usual fate, and so violently did the *Times* assail the Emperor that Lord Granville wrote personally to Mr. Delane, the editor, to complain of its articles: to which Delane replied that he could write by that night's post to put a stop to further annoyance of the Emperor (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, i. 505): an incident which indicates how usefully control of the Press may on occasion be exercised by Government.

After Mr. Disraeli's resignation had followed the decisive General Election of November 1868, the Queen, with no alternative to Mr. Gladstone, wrote him a most gracious letter, to tell him that, with one or two exceptions, she would impose no restrictions on his arrangement of the various offices as seemed to him best for the public service. (December 1, 1868, *Morley*, ii. 253.) And in this spirit the Disestablishment of the Irish Church was carried through, though with this, as with all Gladstone's subsequent legislation on behalf of Ireland, the sympathies of Royalty were frigid in the extreme.

It was not till Cardwell's army reforms, trenching, as the Queen held, on her personal monarchical rights, that the first difficulty of a long series of difficulties with Mr. Gladstone arose. (*ib.* ii. 360.) Her correspondence with

her Prime Minister in 1871 on the abolition of purchase in the Army was, as Lord Morley describes it, copious, and doubtless constitutes a large portion of the five or six hundred holograph letters from the Queen to Mr. Gladstone which will probably never be disentombed from Hawarden. (*Morley*, ii. 526.)

The Queen's estrangement from Liberalism went on apace under experience of Mr. Gladstone's first and energetic Liberal Government. Lord Granville in a letter to Mr. Gladstone of April 18, 1869, noted that the Queen's confidence even in himself was becoming less, that she complained of his tone being too decided in writing to her, that even the influence of Lord Clarendon was on the wane, and that the Queen, owing to her great knowledge and experience, was becoming a "serious power" in the State. (Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, ii. 51.) To the other causes of estrangement came to be added loud complaints of the Queen's continued seclusion, and when these assumed a louder note in 1870, the Queen appealed in vain to Mr. Gladstone for some declaration in her defence. She complained of the "heartless cruel" persecution she endured from the Press, and in the autumn still avowed her anger at the silence of her Ministers. (*Lee*, 411, 413.) In 1871, when considerable republican sentiment began to make itself felt, Mr. Gladstone endeavoured to check the rising popular discontent by exhorting the Queen, not without success, to take the only course which was calculated to allay it. (*Morley*, ii. 426, 427.)

In the meantime also the Imperial policy of closer union with the colonies which Mr. Disraeli put forward in 1872 made a strong appeal to the Queen's sentiments, so that when in March 1873 the defeat of the Irish University Bill led Mr. Gladstone to resign it is not surprising that the Queen "accepted his resignation with alacrity." (*Lee*, 423.) Mr. Disraeli's refusal to take his place at the moment restored his rival to power for a brief season. But relief was not long delayed, for in January 1874 Mr. Gladstone's unwillingness to meet the higher expenditure demanded by the services ended on January 21 in his asking the Queen's assent to a dissolution, and the Election that followed transferred the

reins of power from Liberal to Conservative hands, to the mighty satisfaction of the Queen.

The Ministry of Mr. Disraeli, who became the Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876, proved as interesting in our external policy as it was dull in domestic Legislation. The Minister was a man after the Queen's own heart, a believer in government by sovereigns and statesmen rather than by Parliaments, a disbeliever in popular government. (Holland's *Duke of Devonshire*, i. 267.) He held all Stockmar's ideas of the necessity of exalting the Crown at the expense of the legislature, but with the advantage over Stockmar that he had the power to put such ideas into force. No wonder the Queen was pleased. His policy of Imperialism also made a strong appeal to her, and full rein was to be given to a spirited foreign policy.

The influence of Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism on the Queen dated from a period long antecedent to the time when power enabled him to put his ideas into practice. Thus in reference to the India Bill of 1858, which transferred the Government of India from the East India Company to the Crown, he spoke of the change in a letter to the Queen of January 24, 1858, as "only the antechamber of an Imperial palace"; adding that "Your Majesty would do well to deign to consider the steps which are now necessary to influence the opinions and affect the imaginations of the Indian populations. The name of Your Majesty ought to be impressed on their native life." (*Life*, iv. 166.) As it was in 1876, when the Queen was made Empress of India.

And an Imperial or spirited policy had had one great success. In 1867 the peace of Europe had been threatened by the question of Luxemburg: would Prussia remove her garrison, at the request of France? The Queen was opposed to a "paltry and fatalistic attitude," and begged Mr. Disraeli repeatedly to get Lord Stanley, our Foreign Secretary, to adopt a more vigorous policy. After the crisis had passed, she not unjustly claimed the credit for the preservation of peace, and boasted of the restoration of our lost prestige. (July 29, 1867, *ib.* iv. 472, 473.) Mr. Disraeli expressed the hope to her that Lord Stanley would ultimately be the Minister who would destroy and shatter to pieces

"the decaying theory and system of non-intervention," being sure of her sympathy in that view. (*Life*, iv. 474, August 16, 1867.)

Moreover, a certain affinity of spirit between the Prince Consort and Lord Beaconsfield could not fail of its attraction to the Queen. An anti-Russian policy, vigorous to the point of risk, and a leaning to absolutist government, were the leading ideas of both. When the Prince had died, Mr. Disraeli's admiration for him expressed itself in terms of extravagant but pleasing eulogy. The Prince, he said, was the only person he had ever known who had realised the Ideal; no one else whom he had known had ever approached it. The nearest approach to him in history was Sir Philip Sidney. The name of Albert would be accepted by posterity as "the master-type of a generation of profounder feeling and vaster range than that which he formed and guided with benignant power." (*ib.* iv. 394, April 25, 1863.) And the sincerity of these sentiments is proved by the very similar language with which Mr. Disraeli wrote of him to Count Vitzthum, the Saxon Minister: "With Prince Albert we have buried our Sovereign. This German Prince has governed England for twenty-one years with a wisdom and energy such as none of our kings have ever shown." Had he lived, he would have given us, "while retaining all constitutional guarantees, the blessings of absolute Government." (*ib.* iv. 383.)

But as every step in the path of Imperialism was strenuously opposed by Mr. Gladstone, who stood to his rival for the next six years as opposed as Ahriman to Ormuzd in Persian theology, the late Prime Minister became as a politician more and more distasteful to the Queen. He personified all the ideas she disliked the most. But the antagonism was relieved for the time by Lord Hartington's becoming for those six years the leader of the Liberal Opposition in the Commons and nominally of the Liberal party in the country.

The purchase of the Suez Canal shares in 1875 from the Khedive was the first step in the Imperialist policy, of which we are far yet from having seen the end. It proved a great financial success, for the shares, bought for four million, were worth thirty million in 1909. But against this must

be set the long estrangement in which it involved us with France, and still more the jealousy of Germany, to appease which in the eighties great colonial concessions had to be made to Germany, and Heligoland bartered for concessions in Africa. The bombardment of our east coast towns in 1914 was a link in the long chain of events of which the first link was the purchase of the Suez Canal shares. Gladstone, vaguely conscious of the unknown risks, was opposed to a scheme which had one of its greatest admirers in the Queen.

A further note of divergence was struck by Gladstone's avowed dislike of the Queen's assumption in 1876 of the title of Empress of India. But it was the Balkan troubles that began in 1875 and lasted till after the Russo-Turkish War and the return of Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury from the Congress of Berlin in July 1878 "with peace and honour" which brought to a head the differences between our Imperialist and anti-Imperialist schools of thought, with the Queen heartily in the former camp and Gladstone as leader of the other. The Bulgarian atrocities of 1875 seem to have made as little impression politically on the Queen as they did on her Prime Minister, whilst Gladstone's intervention against our giving any support to Turkey and thus embarrassing Lord Beaconsfield greatly exasperated the Queen. (*Lee*, 437.) How far Lord Beaconsfield's policy—his violent threat of war against Russia in his Guildhall speech of November 9, 1876; his sending the fleet to the Dardanelles in January 1878; his calling out the reserves and bringing troops from India a month later—succeeded in averting war, and how far Gladstone by his eighteen months' counteraction of Beaconsfield's policy "day and night, week by week, month by month," prevented us from actually joining the Turks, may be disputed to the end of time; but the resignation of Lord Carnarvon in January 1878 and of Lord Derby, tentatively at the same time and finally in February 1878, shows how very narrowly we escaped from war at that time. And in all these events the evil genius of the country, in the Queen's eyes, was Mr. Gladstone.

Our semi-pro-Turkish policy in the Russo-Turkish War led directly to the second Afghan War; for it was the sending of our fleet to the Dardanelles, the calling out the reserves,

and the summoning of troops from India in the early months of 1878 that led Russia, as a counter-move, to send an open mission to Cabul, whilst an attack contemplated by us in those parts caused her to send troops to her eastern frontier in Central Asia. (Lord Hartington in Holland's *Devonshire*, i. 227.) To this counter-move Lord Lytton and Lord Salisbury replied by insisting on the Ameer's receiving also a British mission. Hence the Afghan War, beginning in November 1878, and marked in its unhappy course by such incidents as the massacre of the Cavagnari expedition at Cabul in September 1879, as predicted the previous year by Lord Lawrence (*ib.* i. 235), and the defeat of Burrows at Maiwand on July 27, 1880, and the siege of Kandahar, happily relieved by Sir Frederick Roberts on September 1. Foremost in opposition to the whole policy of the war or of trying to force a British Resident on the Ameer was Mr. Gladstone, who denounced it as not only an error but a sin, and foremost accordingly he became in the Queen's displeasure. Lord Beaconsfield, in defending his policy, implored the House of Lords to " brand " with the reprobation of the Peers of England the deleterious dogmas of the Peace party (*ib.* i. 233), but the reprobation of the country as a whole was more unmistakably shown in the General Election of April 1880, which was expressed decisively against Lord Beaconsfield, and in favour of the very Peace party which the Peers implored and were so ready to reprobate.

The episode was one of the bitterest political experiences of the Queen ; for it not only meant the reversal of the whole policy she had sanctioned, but the loss of a Prime Minister who had been the most congenial to her of all she had known since she parted with Lord Melbourne. Though the Election had been won by Gladstone, not by Lord Hartington, and the public voice called for Gladstone, constitutional etiquette demanded that the first offer of the vacant Premiership should be made to Lord Hartington, and earnestly the Queen strove for the services of the more moderate and safer guide. But at their first interview on April 22 he advised her to send for Mr. Gladstone. " She did not like it, and made a good deal of resistance." (Hartington in *Holland*, i. 278.)

So strong was the Queen's repugnance to the idea that Lord Hartington's biographer could only publish extracts

from the private memorandum which Lord Hartington wrote about his interview. (*ib.* i. 276.) When at the Queen's request he saw Gladstone that evening, he "did not think it desirable to communicate to Mr. Gladstone how great was the Queen's reluctance." (*ib.* i. 273.) But Gladstone, as Lord Hartington had warned the Queen, would consent to no post but the highest; he would take no subordinate office either under Lord Hartington or Lord Granville; he would only promise an independent support to such a Government. So the Queen's refusal to offer him the higher post brought matters to a tangle. (*ib.* i. 277.) A second visit to Windsor, however, the next day by himself and Lord Granville ended by reconciling the Queen to the inevitable, and her summoning Gladstone to an audience that same evening.

Dean Wellesley told Sir Horace Rumbold of the extreme nervousness with which Gladstone faced the ordeal. (*Further Recollections*, 195.) The Queen, however, received him, to use his own words, "with that perfect courtesy from which she never deviated." When she complained to him of expressions of his which had given her pain, he justified them on the ground that he had not been in the responsible position of leader of a party or of a candidate for office. When she told him good-naturedly that he would have to bear the consequences of his Midlothian speeches, he readily assented; and to her expressed hope that his general policy would be conciliatory he replied that the occasion for strong opposition had been now removed. (*Morley*, ii. 626–8.)

But the omens of harmony were not propitious. The Queen mistrusted the new Government. She gave the Cabinet to understand that she would insist on the full exercise of her right of comment on all proposals before they were matured; they were to take no decision till their completed plans were submitted to her. (*Lee*, 451.) She was resolved to hold them in hand.

Difficulties immediately arose over the policy of reversal. The Liberal party loudly called for the recall of Sir Bartle Frere from the High Commissionership of Cape Colony, holding him responsible for the war with the Zulus in 1879. The Queen complained of this as part of the tendency of the House of Commons to trench on the province of the Executive; to

which Gladstone replied by admitting the fact, but upholding as within the functions of Parliament, and especially of the House of Commons, the right of challenge and censure of the High Commissioner. (*Morley*, iii. 7.) Nevertheless, as he told the Queen on May 28, 1880, he did all he could to avert a movement for Frere's dismissal. But on July 29 the Minister found himself under "the painful duty" of submitting to her on behalf of the Cabinet a copy of a ciphered telegram recalling Sir Bartle Frere.

The Afghan situation raised a further difference of opinion. Was there to be a complete withdrawal from Kandahar? Lord Ripon, the Viceroy, favoured it, but not the majority of the Indian Council, and one of the strongest opponents of the withdrawal in England was the Queen. (*Holland*, i. 304.) She desired to take military opinion on the subject, and expressed to Lord Hartington on September 8, 1880, great contempt for mere political opinion: "To give up Kandahar solely because the members of the present Government, when in opposition, and unaware of all the real causes of war, were unfavourable to the policy of their predecessors would be a most deplorable course to follow and would lead to inevitable confusion and disaster." She was ready to admit that it might be desirable to hand over Kandahar to the Afghan Government, but she wished "to be convinced of this by the opinions of competent military commanders, and not to accept as final a decision that is only based on political and party expediency." (*ib.* i. 305, 306.) Though General Roberts considered the military retention of Kandahar of "vital importance," the Government decided against him, Lord Hartington on November 11, 1880, sending to the Viceroy a decisive dispatch to that effect, and ending with a strong protest against any measure which might involve the permanent occupation by British troops. The Queen objected to the latter expressions as too binding on the future, reverting again to the vanity of platform pledges: "How often, in the heat of opposition, in the desire to injure the Government, are assertions made and promises held out at public meetings and on the hustings, which are frequently afterwards found to be *most inconvenient* and *detrimental*." (*ib.* i. 310.) Ultimately in April 1881 the last British troops

were withdrawn, but to the last it was difficult to reconcile the Queen to a measure which ran counter to military opinion. (*ib.* i. 316.)

The early eighties were difficult years, with Ireland and Egypt presenting simultaneous problems of exceeding perplexity. And in both problems the Queen's sympathies were more with Lord Hartington than with her Prime Minister. Lord Hartington strongly opposed the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, by which in 1880 the Gladstone Government sought to alleviate Irish distress (*ib.* i. 335), and the rejection of that measure by the Lords had his full approval. That rejection led to fresh disorder in Ireland, and fresh disorder led to a demand for fresh coercion, and for a suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act. Lord Hartington's attitude on this occasion "made it look as if not only the Cabinet but the Liberal party must break up" on November 19, 1880. (Lord Esher in *Holland*, i. 331.) The difference was ultimately compromised by a judicious mixture of coercion and land reform. But Lord Hartington liked the new Land Bill as little as he had liked the Compensation Bill of the previous year. The Bill gave the three F's; judicially fixed rents, gave fixity of tenure so long as they were paid, and empowered the tenants to sell their tenancy. Lord Hartington on April 6, 1881, told Gladstone that he found it "a hard morsel to swallow," and begged that he should not be asked to speak in its defence more than could be helped. (*Holland*, i. 340.) The only Government measure of which Lord Hartington approved was, as he said, the prosecution of the Land League. (*ib.* i. 335.) He complained of the Government's relying too much on the power of conciliation and justice, and being too sentimental about the use of force. (*ib.* i. 336.) But of force there was soon plenty; for under the new coercion Act the Government packed Parnell off to prison, and before the winter of 1881 was over, about a thousand Irishmen were in prison on suspicion, without any form of trial. Lord Hartington was for a "temporary union" between our two parties, and for a political truce, pending the settlement of the Nationalist agitation. Gladstone's position was no easy one, with Hartington and the Queen disliking or thwarting every step he took.

The Phœnix Park murder in May 1882, by the removal of Lord Frederick Cavendish, the brother of Lord Hartington and a nephew of Mr. Gladstone, relaxed a tie between Gladstone and his reluctant colleague which Lord Frederick had done much to strengthen, and thenceforth their divergence increased apace. The measure, promised in the Queen's speech of 1881, of County Councils for Ireland, almost produced a rupture in December 1882. On January 25, 1883, Lord Hartington told Lord Granville that he saw no prospect of his being able to support such a measure ; he thought Ireland required a strong Government, and he was opposed to taking away any of the powers of the Executive, and placing them in the hands of the enemies of the Government ; for such bodies as were proposed would only use their power for the embarrassment of the Government and the further destruction of the landlords. (*Holland*, i. 382–9.) His opposition led to the postponement of the measure, the Government taking up in its place the thorny problem of an extension of the franchise and redistribution of seats, which was destined to bring about an even more acute crisis, that all but wrecked the Government in December 1883.

Throughout this Irish episode there can be no doubt that Lord Hartington more fairly reflected the mind of the Queen than Gladstone did, and it is conceivable that the Queen's instinct was right which had led her to wish for a Hartingtonian rather than for a Gladstonian Ministry. Certainly events would have been different had the Queen's wishes prevailed ; but whether they would have been better must be left to speculation.

The politics of those years can only be understood by some reference to those of Germany. After the war of 1870 a large party arose in Germany which hankered after a German colonial empire, but according to Lord Odo Russell, our ambassador at Berlin, though the Crown Prince was in sympathy, Bismarck at that time was not. All he desired were coaling stations ; colonies needing the protection of a powerful fleet he regarded as a cause of weakness. (To Lord Granville on February 11, 1873, in Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, ii. 337.)

But as a fact Bismarck's desire for a colonial empire

dated back at least as far as 1865, for he had in that year given the Dutch Minister at Vienna to understand that without colonies Prussia could never become a great maritime Power, and that he wanted Holland less for its own sake than for its wealthy colonies. (*Morley*, ii. 320.)

In those days the fears of the famous German statesman centred on Russia. He dreaded a Franco-Russian Alliance, which might result in a simultaneous invasion of Germany from the east and the west. For that reason he wished, not only to avoid all conflict with England, but to establish friendship with this country. He looked on England as the leading Peace Power in Europe. (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 201, 209.) And this at a time when a large section of the German Press was bribed heavily by the French Government, and still more heavily by the Russian, to be violently antagonistic to this country. (*ib.* ii. 274, 275.) He complained that for the preceding eight years England had repelled his constant desire for an Anglo-German alliance. A good effect was produced by a visit to Bismarck in Berlin by Lord Goschen on his way to Constantinople, but English diplomacy remained suspicious. In vain had Lord Odo Russell striven to produce better relations. "For ten years," he wrote on February 19, 1881, "have I preached confidence in Bismarck as a means of success in foreign policy, but in vain. I never could overcome the deep-rooted distrust his wish for a cordial understanding with England inspired at home." (*ib.* ii. 228.)

Lord Granville's policy, however, improved matters, for on November 19, 1881, Lord Ampthill (Lord Odo Russell) wrote to him: "With Bismarck we are on excellent terms, and can at any moment be on the very best, if required, for he has always earnestly wished, for the good of Germany, to establish a practical alliance with England, like that which existed between France and England during the late Empire, but was never able to inspire the requisite confidence at home to inspire it." In 1883 Bismarck was more than ever anxious about the security of Germany's eastern frontiers against Russia.

But by 1884 a great desire for colonial expansion had gradually come to the surface in Germany, and Bismarck

saw the importance of falling in with it. The first suggestion of a cession of Heligoland to Germany was made on May 17, 1884, at an interview between Lord Granville and the German ambassador, Count Munster. "Count Munster said it was as good as impossible that Germany and England should ever be at war, but the cession of Heligoland would strengthen the good feeling of Germany towards this country." (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 351.) Some twelve years before Lord Granville had consulted the Admiralty and the War Office about the island, and, though the Admiralty was strong on its importance to us, the War Office thought there was none. (*ib.* ii. 361.) Sir John Gorst in 1884 proposed its cession to Germany, to no effect; but ultimately Lord Salisbury in 1890 parted with it in exchange for Zanzibar and for sundry German claims in Uganda and the Upper Nile. On August 10, 1890, Germany took formal possession of it.

Unfortunately, this German desire for colonial expansion coincided with a violent German Press campaign against everything English, and Bismarck's policy of friendship gave way to one of jealousy and mistrust. (*ib.* ii. 358.)

But there was another reason for German hostility in those years, and that was the advance of English democracy under the Liberal Government. Lord Ampthill on August 16, 1884, the year when we were extending the franchise to the agricultural labourers, actually wrote to Lord Granville: "The progress of democracy in England is a cause of very serious alarm to the Sovereigns and Governments; and they propose to meet it by consolidating a Monarchical League between Germany, Russia, and Austria: a sort of revival of the Holy Alliance." (*ib.* ii. 363.)

Our equivocal position in Egypt necessitated the conciliation of Germany by some concessions to her colonial ambitions, and therefore, contrary to the wishes of Australia and New Zealand, Gladstone consented to Germany's obtaining a footing in New Guinea and other Pacific islands. The continued hostility of Germany he justly regarded as a greater danger and evil than the temporary irritation of our own colonies. (*ib.* ii. 430.) And the cession of Heligoland by Lord Salisbury must be attributed to the same motive.

And if Egypt complicated our foreign politics, no less did it add to the difficulties of our domestic politics. Our dual financial control with France, established in 1876, soon led to difficulties, and our occupation, at first professedly and intentionally temporary, quickly assumed another aspect. By 1882 the position had become so confused that a Conference of the Powers was summoned at Constantinople. The Sultan, hoping to divide France and England, sent a telegram on June 25, 1882, by which he conferred on England the exclusive control: a proposal which found a strong supporter in the Queen. She complained of the rejection of the proposal by Gladstone and Granville, without consulting the Cabinet, as contrary to regular usage. (*Morley*, iii. 79, 80.)

The bombardment of Alexandria on July 11, 1882, followed by the defeat of Arabi Pasha at Tel-el-Kebir on September 13, 1882, virtually made Egypt a British protectorate. Bright resigned office, and Gladstone in November was with some difficulty prevented by his colleagues from retiring. (*Holland*, i. 378.) It ended in his transferring to Mr. Childers the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and in Lord Hartington's passing from the Indian to the War Office. Other changes were more difficult. The admission of Sir Charles Dilke to the Cabinet as President of the Local Government Board provoked some resistance from the Queen; for had not Sir Charles made some very republican speeches in his time? Lord Morley says that any conflict with the Queen tried Gladstone more than anything, and such conflict there had to be. The Prime Minister's diary for December 11, 1882, has the entry: "Off at 12.15 to Windsor in the frost and fog. Audience of Her Majesty at 3. Most difficult ground, but aided by her beautiful manners, we got over it better than might have been expected." The dispute, though stubborn, ended as Gladstone wished. (*Morley*, iii. 99–101.)

With difficulty the reconstructed Cabinet held together, so divergent were opinions about Ireland and Egypt. The grave events that began with the defeat of Hicks Pasha by the Mahdi in September 1883 and ended with the death of Gordon at the fall of Khartoum on February 1885 shook

the Government to its foundations. The whole subsequent policy of the abandonment of the Soudan was repugnant to the Queen, who as early as January 1884 had vainly urged prompt action for the rescue of the Egyptian garrisons in that region. (*Lee*, 466.) On March 25, 1884, she telegraphed to Lord Hartington: "It is alarming. General Gordon is in danger; you are bound to try to save him . . . you have incurred fearful responsibility." (*Holland*, i. 434.) And when on February 5, 1885, the terrible news came that the relieving expedition had arrived too late, and that Gordon had fallen, she sent an open telegram, not one in cipher, as usual, to Gladstone and Lord Hartington at Holker Hall, blaming them angrily for their dilatory action: to which Gladstone returned a long answer, which may be read in Lord Morley's biography. (iii. 167.)

And simultaneously with the question of how and when relief should be sent to Gordon, the question of the new County Franchise Bill, and its accompaniment or not by a redistribution of seats, marred the pleasure of that summer of 1884. The Bill had passed its second reading by 340 to 210 on April 7, and unanimously its third reading, but the Lords threw it out, first by a majority of 59, and then by one of 50, because a measure for the redistribution of seats did not go with it. Thereupon arose a mighty agitation in the country, Mr. Gladstone being resolved not to dissolve on the question, and declaring that if he dissolved at all, it should be on the question of an organic change in the hereditary Chamber. (*Morley*, iii. 130.) But to prevent the stirring of this greater question was the main reason he gave for making speeches outside his own constituency, when he learnt that his doing so had vexed the Queen. (*ib.* iii. 131.) At a later period, in June 1886, the Queen made a similar objection to the speeches he had made at Manchester and Liverpool; to which Gladstone replied that the leaders of the Opposition had made a rule of such popular agitation, and that he could not conduct the contest in a half-hearted way, or omit the use of any means for placing the issue before the country. (*ib.* iii. 344.)

The deadlock between the two Houses, which our Constitution seems designed to produce, looked almost hopeless,

and but for the Queen might have become so. But she, ever on the side of compromise and pacification, wrote both to Gladstone and to Lord Salisbury, urging an exchange of views between the party leaders of both Houses. So on November 19, 1884, Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote went to Downing Street, and over a friendly cup of tea with Mr. Gladstone discussed the problem in dispute. After a few more meetings the whole matter was settled by November 27, and Mr. Gladstone, informing the Queen of the happy issue of her intervention, said that "his first duty was to tender his grateful thanks to Her Majesty for the wise and gracious and steady influence on her part which had so powerfully contributed to bring about this accommodation, and thus averting a serious crisis of affairs." To which the Queen replied that "to be able to be of use is all I care to live for now." It was one of the happiest episodes in the Queen's reign, showing, as the Irish Church case had shown, how much may be done for the avoidance of political friction by a monarch who has the will and capacity to intervene tactfully between rival parties.

The same wise mediation on the part of the Queen helped the Constitution to surmount the next crisis that occurred after the defeat on June 8, 1885, of the Gladstonian Ministry by a Tory and Irish combination. "The Queen's satisfaction was unconcealed," says Sir Sidney Lee (474). But for many days the position was critical, for there could be no General Election under the new franchise till the autumn, and how could Lord Salisbury lead a stable Government with a majority against him without some promise of Mr. Gladstone's forbearance? It needed much correspondence between the Queen and her rival Ministers to bring about an accommodation, but she succeeded; and Lord Morley closes his chronicle of the transaction with a just tribute to the "dignity in form, the patriotism in substance, the common sense in result, that marked the proceedings alike of the Sovereign and of her two Ministers." (iii. 208.) And it was in the middle of this trouble, on June 13, that the Queen offered and Gladstone refused the honour of an earldom.

They had been difficult years. During the whole five there had been hardly any part of the Gladstonian policy,

domestic or foreign, with which the Queen had been in sympathy. Gladstone himself defined her attitude to the Liberal Ministry as one of armed neutrality. (*Morley*, iii. 291.) She always leant more on military than on political opinion, and for that reason was strongly opposed to the abandonment of the province of Dongola after the fall of Khartoum. Her warnings and protests against the reversal policy of the Government had been frequent, as she reminded Lord Hartington in a letter of May 11, 1885 ; and she was for prosecuting the campaign against the Mahdi. Lord Hartington put the Cabinet case for withdrawal as well as he could, but as he agreed, according to his biographer, " in his heart with the Queen," his failure to convince her is not surprising.

It was perhaps fortunate that the sudden menace of war with Russia after the Penjdeh incident, when on March 30, 1885, Russian troops attacked some Afghan troops in the disputed territory a Russian-British Commission was trying to define and occupied Penjdeh, gave a good additional reason for discontinuing the war with the Mahdi. The quarrel over the Afghan frontier brought us as near to war with Russia as we had been in 1878. The Queen herself on March 4, 1885, telegraphed to the Czar, appealing to the " good feelings of her dear brother to say all he could to avert the miseries which might ensue from an armed conflict between English and Afghan troops." (*Fitzmaurice*, ii. 423.) Her efforts for peace, coupled with the firmness of her Ministers, triumphed over the Press. The reserves were called out ; a vote of credit for eleven millions was granted ; and by May 4 the incident was closed, outstanding differences being referred to arbitration. But how displeasing the settlement was to the Press is shown by Lord Granville's letter of May 29 to the editor of the *Times*, in which he defended the arrangement as excellent and most honourable to this country : " If the influence of the *Times*," he said, " was confined to England, there is no reason why it should not freely criticise the conduct of the Government, if it was thought worthy of blame. But I can conceive no national object to be obtained by disparaging leading articles, and by leaving unpruned the letters of partisan and uninformed correspondents abroad ; the result being to give to Europe, to

Russia, and, above all, to India the idea that we have been humiliated by our rivals." (*ib.* ii. 444.) Not often has the Press been so plainly rebuked. But the war party was foiled. On May 19 Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville of "the wrath of the Tories against us for the unpardonable sin of making peace with Russia." (*ib.* ii. 455.) But it was probably the one incident in Mr. Gladstone's second Ministry that was wholly pleasing to the Queen.

But Home Rule received her whole-hearted aversion; for ever since O'Connell's agitation for Repeal Ireland had been to her a rebel country, to be ruled with the strong arm rather than by any concessions to her grievances. During the critical months between June 1885, when Gladstone fell from power, to January 1886, when he recovered it, the Irish question became acute, and after the General Election in November to December 19, 1885 had returned 85 Irish members in favour of Home Rule, things developed rapidly. The long-concealed breach between Gladstone and Lord Hartington, which had marred the whole of Gladstone's second administration, widened to an open split, with ultimate predominance to the statesman who after five years in the same Cabinet with Gladstone could write of his chief that he could "never get on with him in conversation." (*Holland*, ii. 86.) The Queen bestirred herself, and after the Election entered, at Lord Salisbury's instigation, into a long correspondence with Mr. Goschen, with a view to effecting a coalition between the Conservatives and those Liberals who were ready to secede. (Elliot's *Goschen*, ii. 3.) Her success was complete, and June 8, 1886, which saw the defeat of the first Home Rule Bill in the Commons by 343 to 313, was as red-lettered a day to her as it was a black one for the people of Ireland. The subsequent Election, which gave the Unionist alliance as many as 390 votes against 280 to the Liberals and the Irish, gave "uneoncealed delight to the Queen." (*Lee*, 480.)

On July 30, 1886, Gladstone had his closing audience with the Queen. Seeing that it was probably the last word he might have with the Sovereign whom he had served for fifty-five years, he thought their conversation a singular one. When he had left her in 1874 she had expressed her confident

hope in his lending his support to the throne. Not a word of that sort was said on this occasion; for "her mind and opinions since that day had been seriously warped," and the best feature of the interview was "the scrupulous avoidance of anything which could have seemed to indicate a desire on her part to claim anything in common with me"; scarcely a word on politics; "the rest of the conversation, not a very long one, was filled up with nothings. It is rather melancholy. But on neither side, given the conditions, could it well be helped." (*Morley*, iii. 348.) Was ever anything so dismal?

There followed the six years of Lord Salisbury's administration, which was brought to a close by the General Election of 1892. Lord Salisbury resigned on August 12, and on August 13 the Queen in the Court Circular accepted his resignation "with much regret"; this being the first occasion of the public expression of her disapproval of Home Rule. (*Lee*, 509.) But the majority which supported Gladstone in his fourth administration was insufficient for its purpose; the revelation of Parnell's adultery, and the consequent troubles, threw back the rising tide that had threatened to carry into port any sort of Home Rule Bill. The winds had become contrary, and so the second Home Rule Bill, which, on September 1, 1886, passed its third reading in the Commons by 34, met its inevitable fate at the hands of the Lords in August 1893, being contemptuously rejected by 419 to 41. In March 1894 Gladstone went to Windsor, and resigned his office as Prime Minister, the Queen accepting it "with a coldness that distressed him and his friends." (*ib.* 511.) He had meant to recommend Lord Spencer as his successor, but the Queen did not ask his advice. Her choice fell upon Lord Rosebery, who in July 1895 led the Liberal forces to that famous electoral defeat which restored the Unionist Government to power for the remainder of the Queen's reign. With the Coalition Ministry in power she had no more trouble about Home Rule for the rest of her life.

But, whether Lord Salisbury's or Gladstone's Irish policy was the wisest, the whole episode of the struggle from 1885 to 1893 raises the question whether the weight of the Crown may not be thrown too heavily against a particular Minister or a particular policy. There was no pretence of the Queen's

being neutral in the strife; on the contrary, she threw the whole of her influence into the scales that weighed against the Ministerial policy. Nor was it only about Ireland that antagonism existed between Gladstone and the Queen. For the greater part of his political career he was brought up against the opposition of the Queen, against the opposition of always the same personality. Had Gladstone been a statesman of the United States, he might always have hoped that a change in the Executive might have given freer scope to his views, a more open field to his policy. The tremendous influence, political and social, exercised by the Queen, however wise or beneficial it may conceivably have been, indicates the serious weight such influence imposes on any statesman or policy which fails of Royal approval. The problem is a constitutional one, not a personal one as between Gladstone and Queen Victoria. "Given the conditions," Gladstone wrote about his miserable last interview with the Queen, nothing better could have been expected than their cold parting; the question is whether those conditions are the best or only ones that are possible.

CHAPTER X

The Queen lives to see Imperialism Triumphant

With Home Rule for Ireland definitely removed for the time from the path of practical politics by the return of the Unionist Government to power in 1895 the constitutional interest of the Queen's reign came to an end. During the six remaining years of her life there was no more appreciable conflict between herself and her Ministers. There was no longer a Gladstone to trouble the waters.

Such trouble as there was came from outside, and of that there was more than enough. Hardly was Lord Salisbury in power than in December 1895 President Cleveland's message about the disputed boundary between Great Britain and Venezuela only just failed of provoking a war; whilst no sooner was this cloud dispersed by a timely consent to arbitration than the Jameson raid at Christmas into the Transvaal, followed by the German Emperor's telegram, and the dispatch of British ships to prevent a German landing in Delagoa Bay, threatened a rupture between Germany and ourselves, which a letter from the Queen to her grandson probably did much to avert. (*Annual Register* for 1896, 3.)

To maintain good relations with Germany remained her constant care under increasing difficulties. For the famous telegram only put the crown on an antagonism that the events of the previous ten years had rapidly ripened. The scramble for Africa that began in 1884 had been regulated by the Berlin Congress of 1885, which had partitioned that country into spheres of influence, with the direct consequence in England of that great outburst of Imperialist sentiment to which the first Jubilee of 1887 gave such strong expression. In 1888 fuel had been added to the flame by Bismarck's dislike to the German Crown Princess, and his opposition to the marriage of her daughter Princess Victoria of Prussia to Prince

Alexander of Battenberg; and by the great jealousy of the English physician, Sir Morell Mackenzie, during the fatal illness of the German Emperor Frederick. The Queen herself had gone to Germany and interviewed Prince Bismarck on April 25, 1888, with the hope of establishing friendlier relations; but on the Emperor's death on June 15 a fresh outburst of anti-British feeling in the German Press indicated the failure of her efforts. Not till March 1890 did relations improve, when Lord Salisbury and the Emperor William II. fixed the boundaries of German East Africa and German South-West Africa, and Germany, foregoing her claims to Uganda and the Upper Nile, recognised our protectorate of Zanzibar in exchange for our cession of Heligoland.

Then came the telegram, and the sky darkened again. Germany and Turkey were thrown together, whilst our relations with France, and therefore with Russia, momentarily improved: little probably to the liking of the Queen, to whom those two Powers had always been the special objects of suspicion and distrust.

But her sympathy with the new policy of the reconquest of the Soudan in 1896, with the recovery of Dongola openly avowed as but the preface to the recovery of Khartoum, may be assumed from her reluctant assent to our previous withdrawal. It was the hey-day of Imperialism, when a forward policy had nothing to fear from Liberal opposition. But the jealousy excited by the new Nile expedition undoubtedly weakened Lord Salisbury's hands when the Armenian massacres in September 1895 and again in August 1896 called for the joint intervention of the Powers. Russia had declared in 1895 that she would oppose any action against Turkey by a single Power, and it needed little to turn the Concert of Europe into a general war, and such a war, as Lord Rosebery said, and, as has in 1915 been so appallingly verified, would have proved a scene of universal carnage and ruin, preceded or accompanied by the extermination of the Armenians that remained. (*Annual Register*, 1896, 188.)

That the Concert of Europe, so well called by Lord Salisbury "the inchoate federation of Europe," which with occasional separation from it he did so much to keep alive,

would have prevented the massacres of 1896, when thousands of Armenians were massacred in Constantinople alone, cannot be proved. But the frown of Russia rendered it impotent to do so, and the frown was due to the Soudan expedition. Her Press complained especially of the summoning of our Indian troops to Egypt, and declared our indefinite occupation of Egypt a threat to Russian interests. We were charged with having encouraged the Armenian revolutionaries, with a view to our making a railway from Port Said to the Persian Gulf, and the paralysing of our Persian plans was declared to be a foremost Russian object. (*Annual Register*, 1896, 292.) Thus the Concert was weakened, and Lord Salisbury's course was a difficult one to steer.

In the Cretan troubles, which began in 1896 and continued after the consequent war between Greece and Turkey from April 11 to September 18, 1897, the Concert worked with better effect; for it at least localised hostilities, prevented their spreading to the Balkan States, saved Thessaly from being reannexed to Turkey after the war, and averted the imminent danger of that great universal war which the absence of such Concert made possible or inevitable in 1914. The Concert must be judged not so much by the good it did as by the evil it prevented: a negative merit which fell little short of a positive one. That it involved some adherence to the discredited principle of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, so favoured of Lord Beaconsfield, did not commit Lord Salisbury to the maintenance of Turkish rule at the expense of subject and weaker races; and that the Queen sympathised with this policy rather than with the alternative policy of our acting independently of the Concert or even in opposition to it, to the great risk of war, is not open to doubt.

But it was a time when the British Empire was far from being a beloved member of the family of nations. Speaking on November 1, 1897, to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, Lord Rosebery referred to "the envy and suspicion with which we were regarded abroad" as one of the most salient facts of our policy; and at the beginning of 1898 an English writer described us as "the best hated country in the world," against whom a general crusade might even unite the Powers of Europe. (*Annual Register*, 1898, 3.) The world gave us

no credit for our altruistic intentions, and our Imperialism made us unpopular. It also helped to weaken and finally to terminate the Concert of Europe, which came to an end when Germany and Austria withdrew their ships from the joint operations in Cretan waters in 1898, only to be resuscitated for a brief interval during the common European troubles in China in 1900; and it threw Germany and Turkey still more closely together, with disastrous consequences destined to follow sixteen years later.

With the year 1898 the sky became still more overcast. Anxieties thickened round the Queen, her Ministers, and the country. The year was crowded with memorable events, such as the Dreyfus case in France, the deaths of Bismarck and of Gladstone, the Spanish-American War, the final liberation of Crete from Turkish rule, the German Navy Bill, the German Emperor's visit to Jerusalem, the victory over the Khalifa at Omdurman on September 2, and in the midst of the turmoil the Czar's invitation to the Powers to an international Conference for an attempt to pacify our troubled world.

This last was the chief ray of brightness in the encircling gloom. For China had become an additional bone of contention between the rapacious Powers, greedy of fresh markets and concessions. The German occupation of Kiau-chow in Nov. 1897, "to the great advantage of China, of commerce, and of this country," according to Mr. Balfour (*Annual Register*, 1898, 92), had been followed on December 18, 1897 by the entry of a Russian squadron into Port Arthur, to the great disquietude of no nation more than our own. That Lord Salisbury kept at peace was little less than a miracle. His direction to the admiral of a British squadron to quit Port Arthur at the wish of Russia, and our subsequent occupation of Wei-hai-Wei as a counter-move to the move of Russia, met with much adverse criticism; but the broad fact remains to Lord Salisbury's credit that in a new and difficult crisis he maintained peace, when the policy advocated by the majority of his followers might easily have involved us in war with every Power in Europe but Italy. Nor was his course made easier by such a remark as Mr. Chamberlain's at Birmingham on May 13, 1898, when in allusion to Russian

diplomacy he said, "As to the promises which were given and broken a fortnight afterwards, I had better say, Who sups with the devil must have a long spoon."

At the same time our differences with France over boundaries in West Africa had reached a critical state. And after these had been happily settled by the convention signed at Paris on June 15, 1898, the Fashoda incident in September again brought war within visible distance. The moderation shown on both sides, and the advice of Count Muravieff, the Russian Minister, to France to accept a pacific solution (*Annual Register*, 1898, 280), averted the worst catastrophe, but much irritation survived. Nor was it soothed by Mr. Chamberlain's complaint on December 8 of the difficulty of maintaining friendship with a country which was constantly pulling the lion's tail, or by our ambassador's references to the French policy of "pin-pricks," which led to some demands for his recall. In these circumstances an Anglo-German alliance seemed to many, and notably to Mr. Chamberlain, the most hopeful direction for our policy to take, and one may be sure that for this the Queen forgave him much that offended her in the New Diplomacy. For this can have appealed to her as little as the New Woman, who was in fashion at the same time.

It was in response to this leaning towards Germany, and probably under the influence of the Queen, that the German Emperor seized the opportunity of endeavouring to improve relations between his country and ours. His telegraphing to the British Agency in Egypt his congratulations after Omdurman on this avenging of "poor Gordon's death," and his calling for three cheers for the Queen from the troops he addressed at Hanover on September 4, gratified public opinion; whilst it is notorious that when Fashoda brought war with France within the horizon of possibilities, "the sympathetic attitude of the German Government" contributed not a little to the easing of the situation. (Elliot's *Goschen*, ii. 219.)

But the fates were set on turning all that happened to future war. Much turned on that other convention with France which was signed on March 21, 1899, and defined our respective frontiers in Central Africa. For this apportion-

ment of enormous tracts of territory, regardless either of the wish of the natives or of the suzerainty of the Sultan, raised the suspicion in Constantinople that both countries aimed at nothing less than the destruction of Mohammedan rule, and so drew still closer the ties between Germany and Turkey. It was accordingly on November 27, 1899, that the Sultan granted to the Deutsche Bank Syndicate a concession for the extension of the Anatolian railway, which was to pass by Bagdad along the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates to Basra on the Persian Gulf, and so bring all that district under German influence and enterprise. (*Annual Register*, 1899, 73, 74, 292.) Thus in the sequence of confused aims and issues which makes up human history does it as often happen as the converse, that events which seem propitious in one direction often prove unpropitious in another.

Then out of this seething cauldron of international distrust, suspicion, and trade competition emerged in October 1899 the British-Boer War. Its seeds had been sown by the Jameson raid at the close of 1895. In the Budget debate of April 28, 1897, Sir William Harcourt had declared, in reference to the vote of £200,000 for the South African garrison, that Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, had "in every utterance of his during the last few months been endeavouring to exasperate sentiment in South Africa, and to produce what, thank God, he had failed in producing, a racial war." Nor, considering the menace of the raid and the agitation that preceded the raid, was the answer convincing, that the Boers had spent millions on armaments to an extent unjustified by any ordinary defensive policy. What part or side the Queen took in the face of this quickly ripening trouble, and what she felt about the action of Mr. Rhodes or the Chartered Company, still awaits disclosure.

It was indeed a bad omen for the Peace Conference which was opened at The Hague on May 16, 1899, that on the last day of the same month the fruitless meeting took place at Blomfontein between President Kruger and our High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner. Materials not yet published will some day throw light on the Queen's attitude to the tragic war that followed. Did she agree with Lord Kimberley in his condemnation of the New Diplomacy, which preferred

negotiations in full view of an excitable public to negotiations carried on quietly between the principals in the dispute? Trained as she had been through a long life to believe in tact and courtesy in dealing with nations as with individuals, she can hardly have read with pleasure Mr. Chamberlain's speech of June 26, 1899, when he spoke of "the misgovernment of the Transvaal as a festering sore which poisoned the whole atmosphere of South Africa," or his speech of August 26, when, in a still more critical state of things, he complained of President Kruger "dribbling out reforms like water from a squeezed sponge," though a few days later he accepted by a dispatch the very reforms the President conceded.

Equally interesting it will be to learn what she thought of the suzerainty question as a pretext for the demands which led to the war. Did she, with Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, regard the raising of the suzerainty question as "unnecessary and inept"; or hold Sir Edward Clarke's view that for a British Minister to assert, after the Convention of 1884, that we retained a suzerainty over the Transvaal was "a breach of national faith"? (*Annual Register*, 1899, 212.) Did she deem it consistent with our stipulated non-interference with the internal affairs of the Transvaal Republic to demand a far-reaching change in its electoral law?

Or did she exert influence to prevent the war? She was then in her eightieth year, and lacked the vigour she had shown in 1864, when she had been prepared to exercise her full prerogative to prevent an Anglo-German War in defence of Denmark. And Lord Beaconsfield's lessons of Imperialism had left on her so indelible an impression that in Mr. Gladstone's phrase "her mind and opinions had been seriously warped."

But in any case she continued wisely to strive for a good understanding with Germany. Feeling doubtless that, unless the intermarriages of Royalties contribute something to the world's peace, Royalty has a claim the less on the world's regard, she encouraged frequent visits from her grandson on the throne of Germany. In November 1899, when the German Press indulged, like that of other neutral countries,

in offensive caricatures of the Queen and in articles hostile to this country, the Emperor's visit to the Queen was some mitigation of the strained relations. It counted for something that, accompanied by his Foreign Minister, Count Bulow, he conferred with Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Balfour, and contributed £300 to the widows and orphans of the Scots Greys, as colonel-in-chief of a regiment. It was mainly due to the influence of the Queen that he refused all countenance to a coalition against us, notoriously advocated in other quarters, during our early reverses in the war; so that the credit belongs to the Queen, if not of preventing the Boer War, of having prevented it from becoming a European War as well.

But in the case of France no such mitigation of bad feeling was possible. The verdict of guilty "with extenuating circumstances" against Dreyfus on September 9, led to proposals in our Press to stop all commercial intercourse with France and to boycott her forthcoming Exhibition. So the beginning of the Boer War led to very virulent writing and caricaturing in the French Press; in response to which Mr. Chamberlain on November 30 at Leicester warned the French "to mend their manners," and openly advocated an alliance between ourselves, Germany, and the United States: a most unfortunate sample of the New Diplomacy, inasmuch as its only effect was to give equal offence in Paris, in Berlin, and in Washington.

As the Queen only lived for a few weeks into the new century, it may be said that she and the nineteenth century expired together. But her reign went out in cloud and sorrow. The Boer War was still unfinished, and it had estranged us from every other nation. For the Continental Press, irrespective of party, espoused the cause of our enemies, and Professor Mommsen declared that outside England not a single voice defended the war. When President Kruger visited France in the last days of November 1900, he met with an almost regal reception, and the only sign of friendship towards us was shown by the Emperor William, who made an excuse for not receiving him at Berlin. So great was the bitterness against us that Lord Salisbury on May 9, 1900, urged this as an argument for a large increase of our Army. Our foreign policy had come to count for so little in the councils

of Europe that in the Boxer Rising against Europeans in China our proposal that Japan should be invited to protect the endangered interests of Europeans was scouted " as soon as it was known that Great Britain was favourable to it." (*Annual Register*, 1900, 158.) A war with one or more Powers in connection with the intrigues for the spoliation of China loomed ahead as a quite possible addition to our African troubles, and the only bright spot was our agreement with Germany of October 16, 1900, for the pursuit of a common policy in the Far East. And considering that another massacre of Armenians was the chief incident of Turkish history in 1900, the sending of Sir John Fisher to offer the Queen's congratulations to Abdul Hamid on the celebration in September of the jubilee in honour of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his reign was an incident rather to be forgotten than remembered.

So the great Queen's reign went out in war and the shadow of war. The Imperialism which had been gathering force ever since the fall of Gladstone was bearing fruit not untainted with bitterness. But the Queen never swerved nor faltered. Sir Horace Rumbold, visiting her at Windsor in the last month of her life, found in her no sign of that wish for peace at any price which some attributed to her ; on the contrary he found her " very keen, very angry, and very determined," and deeply resentful of President Kruger's challenge. (*Further Recollections*, 355.) Her death did much to allay the sore feelings which the war had engendered. For a moment the Concert of Europe was reunited at her funeral. The Emperor William cancelled German festivities then about to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Prussian monarchy, whilst other nations paid their sincere homage of respect to the most venerated of contemporary Sovereigns. The pupil of Stockmar, very much by following the lines he had impressed upon her in youth, had raised the monarchy to a height few would have thought attainable when she ascended the throne. She had gained ground for the Executive at the expense of Parliament. By her unfailing devotion to the duties of a position she had once felt so irksome she had during the longest reign in the record of our annals done more to establish the claims of

monarchy on a basis of popular affection and personal respect than any other Sovereign in our history. And the chief regret in a retrospect of her reign must be that she did not pass away with her country at peace or in the enjoyment of the goodwill of all other nations.

CONCLUSIONS

No period of our history is marked by a more marvellous extension of the British dominions and of national prosperity than that we have traversed from 1760 to 1901; yet the same period lends no support to the common idea that our Constitutional system has worked with invariable smoothness. For friction has been shown to have been its constant feature. It is very possible that no other system would have worked with less, and that any other might have worked with more; but the admission should not cover the weak points which the experience of four reigns has detected in our constitutional armour, and from which it were better to relieve it.

The period reviewed shows a striking loosening of that tendency to an almost abject loyalty which was so absurdly displayed in the days of Lord Chatham, and by no one more notably than by him. Modern statesmen no longer conclude their letters to the Sovereign by flinging themselves at the feet of Majesty; the Closet is no longer spoken of with bated breath; and Ministers, though still the servants of the Crown, regard themselves more justly as the servants of the Nation.

But the course of events, whilst reducing the appearance of monarchical power, has tended to its increase in reality. For, although the actual Veto has passed into disuse, the Veto precedent has become a more serious barrier against any legislation distasteful to the Crown. Mr. Lecky's statement that English sovereignty is "so restricted in its province that it has, or ought to have, no real influence on legislation" (iii. 160), is hardly borne out by the influence exercised over legislation by George III., George IV., William IV., and Queen Victoria. For without any formal prohibition the whole weight of the social influence of the Crown may so easily be thrown into the scale against any particular measure as to make both its introduction difficult and its passing impossible. The history of Home Rule in 1886 and 1895 may serve as an

illustration of this. Where every speech of leading statesmen is closely scanned, and approved or condemned, as has naturally always happened, a tremendous pressure is brought to bear on political independence, and the statesman who can persevere against the known and felt opposition of the Sovereign must be inspired by an indifference to difficulties which is rare in human nature.

What the experience of the period clearly proves is the dependence of our system for good results on the character and intelligence of the Sovereign, and the impossibility of regulating these is the worst defect in a Constitution which seemed to George III. so absolutely perfect. Under no republican system, with frequently changing Presidents, would it have been possible for Catholic Emancipation to have been deferred from 1801 to 1829: a delay mainly attributable to the immense power of obstruction conferred by our Constitution on monarchs like George III. and his son. The whole of the nineteenth-century history of Ireland would probably have been better and happier but for the fatal subjection of the policy of the country to two minds, of which one was often worse than weak and the other never pre-eminently strong. The price we paid was a dear one; for the whole dismal record of agrarian crimes, Coercion Acts, evictions, Land Reform agitation, and finally the Home Rule agitation, might never have stained the page of history, had the Legislative Union been accompanied, or speedily followed, as Pitt wished, by such a concession to Irish feeling as the non-exclusion of Catholic representatives from the United Legislature.

Again, the prolongation of the American War and of the war with Republican France was mainly due to the personal character of George III., who, though pacific in theory, fell a ready victim in practice to the common arguments by which the militarists of all ages have succeeded in thwarting the restoration of peace. Such arguments as that the enemy cannot be trusted to keep a treaty of peace, or that no peace can be conclusive till the enemy has been forced to change his moral principles, were barriers against which the wisdom of Pitt beat in vain; the King in this matter not simply reflecting public opinion, but setting the fashion to it.

Especially in the department of foreign affairs did the influence of Queen Victoria tend to enhance the power of the Crown; for the Queen, though paying a ready deference to her Ministers in domestic legislation, claimed and exercised her right to more than a concurrent control where Imperial matters were concerned. The idea was yet to emerge of any democratic control of foreign policy, or of the people having any right to a voice in matters of policy which touched their interests far more closely than any others; though the doctrine that diplomatic negotiations should not be secret was frequently propounded at public meetings addressed by Cobden and Kossuth. (Walpole's *Russell*, ii. 136.) Foreign affairs were for the Crown to settle in concert with one Minister or a few; they were too high for Parliament or the country at large. During the latter part of Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry, when war was so often either actual or imminent, the doctrine became fashionable, that, owing to the ignorance of the general public about foreign mysteries, foreign policy should rest as exclusively as possible with the Executive; and therefore for the Queen, as head and arm of the Constitution, a larger share was claimed in the control of foreign policy. Even Lord Hartington was moved to protest against such a reversion to ideas of Imperial autocracy as were advocated in articles like that on "The Crown and the Constitution" in the *Quarterly Review* for April 1878. (*Holland*, i. 251.) And Gladstone took up his pen against a doctrine which encouraged the Crown to act independently of its constitutional advisers; maintaining that such a doctrine could no more thrive in England than the jungles of Bengal could be raised on Salisbury Plain.

But doctrines have a vigorous vitality, and the high monarchical pretensions which were so luxuriant in the reign of Queen Anne by no means died with her. In a limited Constitutional Monarchy they lie never far below the surface, and need but favourable conditions for their revival. Was it not so lately as 1911, the first year of the reign of King George V., that an address to him was signed by many peers and others, urging him to thwart the policy of the Ministry by vetoing the Parliament Bill? A monarch who chose to exercise his full prerogative of making peace or war, or of

dismissing his Ministers, would probably find that his powers were much less restricted than the text-books define them. In the future that stretches to eternity before us every variety of political contingency is possible, even to the actual abdication of a monarch, averse perhaps from such a life of thraldom as George III. or Queen Victoria bore so heroically ; but so long as it seems better not to venture on new paths of change, such provision as is possible would seem to be desirable to enable us to face, without danger to freedom, such changes as the temper of the times or of the monarch may have in store for us.

It was once suggested by Horace Walpole that at the beginning of every reign a concordat should be made with the new Sovereign, by which, for the better avoidance of subsequent friction, he should be shorn of some portion of the Royal prerogative (*Last Journals*, ii. 419) ; nor is it easy to think of a more orderly plan for gradually modifying the exercise of the prerogative on points where accumulated experience suggests such modification as desirable. With such a custom, for instance, all the trouble that occurred under Queen Victoria regarding the rival claims of the Crown and of Parliament over the Army might have been avoided. And in the same way such incidents as George III.'s dismissal of the Coalition Ministers in 1783 or William IV.'s of the Whig Ministry in 1834 might have been provided against by some stipulation of Parliamentary consent.

That an hereditary monarchy has advantages over an elective one is among the few things that historical experience can confidently claim to have proved. Lord Beaconsfield's dictum that our ancestors had done wisely in placing the prize of supreme power outside the sphere of human passions and ambitions (*Speeches*, ii. 492) hardly admits of serious challenge. But hereditary monarchy suffers from the drawback of placing that prize too much within the sphere of pure and uncontrollable chance ; and the same system which made a Queen Victoria possible is also responsible for a George IV. Experience, therefore, though it has proved the superiority of an hereditary to an elective monarchy, cannot yet assert the superiority of an hereditary monarchy to a republican form of government.

Neither form of government is free from its special defects; and the Horatian maxim that *Nihil est ab omni parte beatum* applies before all things to political systems. And hence the claim may be the wiser one that it is better to try to clear existing Governments of admitted imperfections than to face the risks of a total change of form. The imperfections of our own political system are perhaps only more obvious than those of our neighbours. They are, chiefly, the danger of flagrant political difference on foreign or domestic affairs between the Crown and the country; the great power still claimed and exercised by the Crown over foreign policy; its power to check or prevent legislation it dislikes; the difficult relationship between the Crown and its Ministers, due often to personal antipathy; and the danger of the Crown's being drawn from a position of neutrality to one of keen partisanship. And these difficulties seem to be too dependent on the chance of individual character to admit of easy remedy.

But against such defects must be set certain broad facts which may be fairly quoted on the credit side of our system to the present time. Under it many a political crisis has been safely weathered, and, though rather narrowly missed in the reigns of George IV. and William IV., actual revolution has been avoided. Though desirable legislation has often been thwarted by our monarchs, much also has been accomplished or even facilitated by them without any friction whatever.

Nor can it be said that our experience establishes any causal connection between monarchy and war. Kant's famous generalisation that the way to perpetual international peace lies in the substitution of republics for monarchies, though borne out by the Pan-American League, which since 1889 has bound the twenty-one republics of the American Continent in a confederacy of peace, is hardly supported by our later history. It was Queen Victoria, for instance, who mainly kept us at peace with Germany in 1864, when the people would have jumped at war. A democracy under modern conditions, sensitive to every gust of rumour, and to every whiff of passion that is fanned by the Press, is subject to no restraint from war like that which may operate on a

pacific monarch. Lord Salisbury once wrote of "a thirst for empire and a readiness for aggressive war" as a characteristic of democracy, whether in ancient or modern times (*Essays*, ii. 92); and though the limited nature of ancient democracies puts them out of comparison with the word democracy as now understood, the negation of the charge has yet to establish itself. "Free institutions," he wrote, "are counted as dust beneath their feet by a democracy that is bent on conquest" (*ib.* ii. 92), and he predicated a "lawless lust of territory" as the one great point on which both despotisms and democracies agreed. (*ib.* ii. 104.) And who can with certainty predict the contrary of the future?

If Lord Salisbury's view be right, whatever other merits a democracy may have, it is not to the spread of popular forms of government over the earth that the pacifist can look with confidence for the realisation of his dreams of a world from which the curse of war has been eliminated. On this point the rival claims of the rival systems of government must remain open questions; the commercial incentive to war may operate as strongly on the American or the Russian republics as it ever did on monarchical countries; and centuries more of experiments in Government must be added to the world's experience before a decisive judgment can be formed. But if it be the destiny of the world to become more addicted to war as it becomes more democratic, no republican transformation can be looked to as making for the increase of freedom, and military democracies can hardly escape an ultimate metamorphosis into military despotisms, with as crushing a control of individual liberty as the worst autocracies have ever exercised. Free assemblies are not the best engines for the waging of wars, nor can Lord Salisbury's remark in the Boer War be forgotten, that the British Constitution as hitherto known makes no good fighting machine. It may be said of every war, what the Prince Consort said of the Crimean War, that it places Parliamentary Government on its trial. And, if an era of greater and longer wars than we have known in the past lies before us, it may well be that the maintenance of free institutions will prove even more difficult

than their creation. It may therefore be in other directions than in changed forms of Government that we should look with the best hope for placing the peace of our war-ridden world on some basis less precarious than it has rested on in the past. As, for instance, in changed forms of thought about traditional political conceptions ; in broader ideas of Nationality and Commerce, and of the common interests of all countries in each other's prosperity. Above all, probably in a revulsion of feeling against Imperialism, which is merely a modern word for a very ancient thing : for that lust for the satisfaction of territorial and commercial cupidity which is as old as humanity itself. The Russian people, regarding Monarchy and Imperialism as so closely intertwined as to be inseparable, and regarding Imperialism as the source of all militarist tyranny and of the intolerable sufferings of war, cut themselves free of both by the same stroke. The experiment will show whether the connection between the two is real or fanciful. Should the Russian forecast prove correct, a lesson of incalculable value will have been given to the world, and Russia will have given it a light on the path towards the attainment of that lasting peace to which hitherto so faint a ray of hope has directed the longings of mankind.

But this belongs to the province of the prophets, and to the distant side of time.

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Printed by Morrison & Gibb Limited, *Edinburgh*

THE MONARCHY IN POLITICS

The Monarchy in Politics. By James Anson Farrer. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company.

FROM George III. to Queen Victoria, Mr. Farrer shows by means of state documents, the acts of statesmen, their correspondence with their sovereigns, from diaries, biographies, histories, and from many collateral sources, the political activities of these four British monarchs in relation to their constitutional rights and limitations. From King John to George III. the question of the constitutional rights of British monarchs had been more or less a matter of ministerial and parliamentary concern, evolving into the party government of the Empire under the elder Pitt in the reign of George II. With the accession of George III. to the throne, the dominant power of Pitt was broken, and with it the predominance of party government; King George believing, as Mr. Farrer says, that the "country should be governed by his personal friends, not by Whigs nor Tories; ministers should be selected from either side, so that the Government might be based on what was called 'a broad bottom.'"

The struggle between George III. and Pitt on the constitutional rights of the monarch to meddle in the political machinery of the Government is well known; the king ultimately triumphing. But with George IV., a weak and pleasure-loving king, the party government built up by the elder Pitt was re-established. William IV. tried to carry out the royal prerogatives in political affairs so ably exercised by George IV., but the long reign of the Regency under the Prince of Wales and his accession as George IV., party government had become too strongly rooted in practice for William IV., even if he had been as able as the third Hanoverian king, to exceed his constitutional rights. So his short reign was one long struggle with his ministers whom he disliked immensely; they bequeathed the party system with force and power to the next reign.

It is in this reign, that of Queen Victoria, that the royal participation in politics is given its most interesting account. Quite half the book is devoted to the question as it affected the long rule of Queen Victoria. The queen under the tutelage of Baron Stockmar, had been studiously trained in foreign and domestic affairs, and from the beginning she took an active part in the government of the empire.. With all her ministers from Palmerston and Lord John Russell to Gladstone, and with Disraeli excepted, she was more or less in conflict over policies when her own views were not carried out. Palmerston and Lord John Russell, though they made a show of insisting upon their constitutional rights to govern without interference from the sovereign, bent to her will

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portant questions, notably the Dano-German quarrel over Schleswig-Holstein, in the relations towards Napoleon III. and the Italian revolution. The foreign policy of England during the early years of her reign was largely directed by the dominating influence of the queen. Gladstone, it had often been said, was least liked by the queen of all her ministers, and it was because he not only sought but did limit her political influence upon his administrations. With Disraeli the queen was in perfect accord in his imperialistic policy, the growth and triumph of which, making the empire so rich and powerful, has had a great deal to do with the character and wisdom of the queen in winning for her a grateful and affectionate memory in the hearts of her people. She proved towards the end of her long reign that a monarch may have political influence in the government and yet not abuse constitutional rights.

In conclusion, Mr. Farrer remarks that, "No period of our history is marked by a more marvellous extension of the British dominions and of national prosperity than that we have traversed from 1760 to 1901; yet the same period lends no support to the common idea that our constitutional system has worked with invariable smoothness. For friction has been shown to have been its constant feature. . . . The course of events, whilst reducing the appearance of monarchical power, has tended to its increase in reality. For, although the actual veto has passed into disuse, the veto precedent has become a more serious barrier against any legislation distasteful to the Crown. Mr. Lecky's statement that English sovereignty is so restricted in its province that it has, or ought to have, no real influence on legislation, is hardly borne out by the influence exercised over legislation by George III., George IV., William IV. and Queen Victoria. For without any formal prohibition the whole weight of the social influence of the Crown may so easily be thrown into the scale against any particular measure as to make both its introduction difficult and its passing impossible. Where every speech of leading statesmen is closely scanned, and approved or condemned, as has naturally always happened, a tremendous pressure is brought to bear on political independence, and the statesmen who can persevere against the known and felt opposition of the sovereign must be inspired by an indifference to difficulties which is rare in human nature."

Edward S. Farrow's "Dictionary of Military Terms" will be issued at once by J. B. Lippincott Company in a new edition which will include all the latest war words.

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